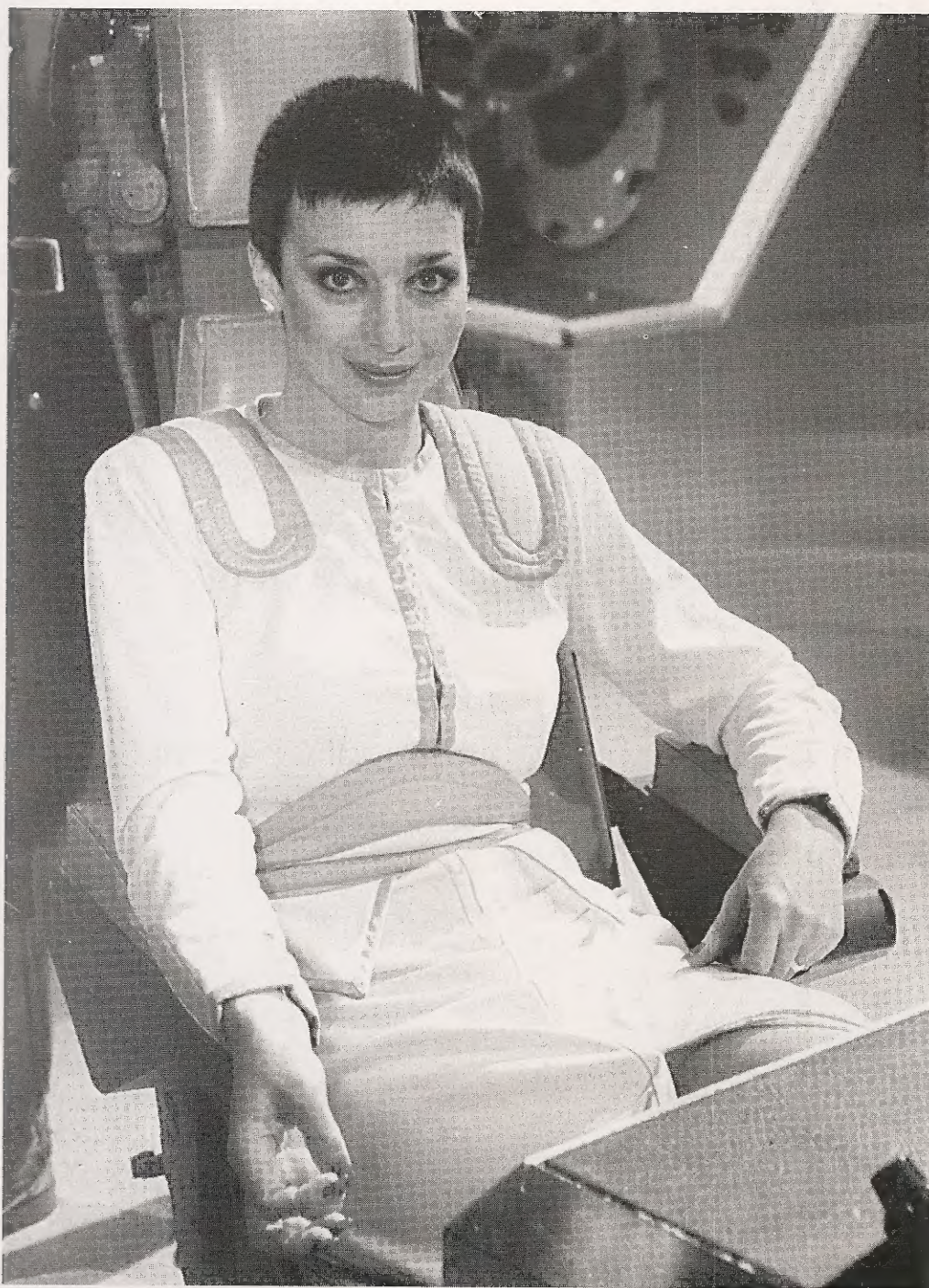


HORIZON

THE
BLAKES 7

APPRECIATION SOCIETY





NEWSLETTER No. 24

© Horizon Club, May 1990

COMMITTEE

DIANE GIES - Club Secretary &
Co-ordinator, NL Editor / Submissions,
Treasurer & Mummy!
18 Holt Road, North Wembley,
Middlesex HA0 3PS.

NICOLA BEST - Membership &
Renewal Secretary + Research
71 Cowdenbeath Path,
Bemerton Street,
London N1 0LE.

JACKIE OPHIR - Zine Editor / Submissions
& General liaison with Supreme Cdr. Diane!
490c Bury New Road,
Salford 7, Manchester M7 0WN.

Tel: 081-904 5588
Fax: 081-905 5033

Tel: 071-278 5716 (eve)

Tel: 061-792 0058 (eve)

ANN STEELE - Zine & Script
orders, + Orac's Oddments ads,
66 Sherwood Park Road,
Sutton, Surrey. SM1 2SG.

JULIETTE CHRISTUSKI
Photo Orders,
461 Park West,
Edgware Road,
London W2 2QZ.

STEVE HAINES - Fiddly bits of Merchandise
14 Halliwell Avenue,
Hathershaw, Oldham,
Lancs. OL8 3DL.
Ph: 061-626 8765 (eve.)

Tel: 071-262 7273

FLISS DAVIES - Publicity Officer & Reciprocal Stuff
KEVIN DAVIES - Archives Research
53 Vaughan Road, Birkdale, Southport,
Merseyside PR8 4BX.
Ph: 0704-69853 (eve.)

MARY MOULDEN - Newsflash Service
88 Cricket Road, Oxford,
Oxon. OX4 3DH.
Ph: 0865 778024 (eve.)

ROSEMARIE LOFT
Computer Genius

VALERIE GUY -
No Specific Portfolio

HONORARY MEMBERS

HONORARY LIFE PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER OF HORIZON - PAT THOMAS.; JUDITH SMITH, JACQUELINE PEARCE, MICHAEL KEATING, STEVEN PACEY, PAUL DARROW, JANET LEES PRICE, JOSETTE SIMON, LORNA HEILBRON, JAN CHAPPELL, PETER TUDDENHAM, SALLY KNYVETTE, GARETH THOMAS, SHEELAGH WELLS, GLYNIS BARBER, BRIAN CROUCHER, MAT IRVINE, TERRY NATION, DAVID JACKSON, COLIN DAVIS, STEPHEN GREIF.

EDITORIAL

Hi, everyone! Gosh, it's been an exciting few months - there's so much news I barely know where to start!

First of all, hello and welcome to all our patient members, old and new. Thank you for bearing with us as the newsletter is late time after time - although you must admit, it makes your membership last longer!

An extra special welcome, now, to our two new Honorary Members: Colin Davis and Stephen Greif. Having previously interviewed Terry Nation, the man who first created Blakes 7, we were very interested to interview one of the last of the B7 writers, Colin Davis, who wrote the episode 'Gold'. The interview (which was really more an informal chat) took place in a Devon tea shop, over huge piles of scones and cream! Colin gave us a fascinating and entertaining insight into the world of writing for radio and TV in general, and what it was like working on fourth-season B7 in particular! Stephen Greif really needs no introduction - although he appeared in only five episodes in the entire series, he has captivated the B7 audience and gathered huge numbers of fans with his mesmeric portrayal of Travis II! We're delighted that he's agreed to become an honorary, and hope to be doing an interview with him in the not-too-distant future.

The new decade has got off to an excellent start, with a whole surge of renewed interest in B7, chiefly resulting from the re-release of the BBC Videos. Yes, the Beeb have seen sense at last, and are now selling their official tapes at the more realistic price of £9.99. Not only that, but they've also released the fourth tape, 'Aftermath', which for reasons known only to the Beeb, was previously sold only in Australia! All four tapes are doing nicely in the HMV Video Top Twenty Charts. As I type this (April 3rd), 'The Beginning' is currently number 8 in the charts, 'Duel' (listed by HMV as 'The Dual'!) is number 12, 'Orac' (similarly retitled 'Oracle'!) is number 14, and 'Aftermath' number 18. So it looks as though the BBC are beginning to accept that B7 just WON'T go away! Who knows, perhaps we may even see some repeats on TV? (But don't hold your breath...)

The past few months have been nicely busy for some of 'our' actors. Michael Keating has appeared in 'A View From the Bridge' and 'Noises Off' in Cheltenham, with a third play, 'Outside Edge', coming up somewhere near Reading; Paul Darrow and Janet Lees-Price are currently appearing in 'Trap for a Lonely Man' in Surrey (until end April, so it'll be long over by the time you read this, of course!!); Glynis Barber and Jacqueline Pearce have appeared in London, and Stephen Greif in Windsor.

Now, look out of your window. Does the moon look blue? Are there pink elephants flying by? Has a U.F.O. landed on your lawn? Well, try believing this, then: **THE EPIC IS READY!!!** Astonishing but true! All of you who ordered it should have received it by now (okay, you should have received it 4 years ago, but we won't go into that!). And those of you who haven't ordered it should seriously consider doing so - it's huge and glossy and glorious - a thoroughbred racehorse of a zine! (...Ed.- And due to the printers mucking it up **three times** and having to reprint it, we ended up with a zine which looks - and indeed cost the printers - at least double what we are charging!!)

Next: What has Kevin Davies got, that's nine inches long and flashes? Yes, the new Comet Miniatures Model Liberator, of course! (What did you think I meant?). Although it's not the easiest of models to construct, it's well worth the effort, as the result is an elegant and beautifully detailed ship. Kevin has written a diary for this newsletter in which he describes how he built his model, together with a circuit diagram for those who wish their ends to flash too! Paul Holroyd, (who designed the Technical Manual), has also reviewed the kit, and provided very precise instructions on how to build it. So now you have no excuse not to build one - or at any rate, to coerce somebody to build one for you!

You've heard of Pro-Conventions, you've heard of Fan-Conventions. But I bet you've never yet seen a review of a Non-Convention! When Del-10 was cancelled, Nicola and I were left high and dry with air tickets to America that we couldn't cancel. Horizon is proud to present the saga of what Nicola and I did **INSTEAD** of Del-10 - fandom's very first Non-Con Review! (Well, I couldn't disappoint Marise Morland-Chapman, could I?!)

Yes, folks, once again it's a bumper-size newsletter! Apart from all the usual news, reviews, and interview, we've got a new Tec-Sec by Kathryn Andersen, this time on the subject of Terial Cells; we've got the results of the poetry competition; plus all the wonderful articles and LOCs that you have sent us! Keep 'em coming in - this is YOUR newsletter, we like to hear what you have to say.

Right, that's enough from me. Happy reading -

RENEWAL BITS

Jackie

YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS DUE FOR RENEWAL BEFORE THE NEXT N/L IF A CROSS APPEARS HERE

ALL RENEWAL QUERIES, MONEY & ENVELOPES TO BE SENT TO NICOLA BEST, 71 Cowdenbeath Path, Bemerton Street, London N1 0LE. **ALL cheques/POs payable to HORIZON, the B7 Appreciation Society for sterling OR US dollars.** Membership fee is now £5.00 PLUS 4 **LARGE** self-addressed envelopes, stamped with 50p on each for U.K. members. Overseas members will pay the £5.00 plus postage costs: Air mail to Europe - £4.00, A zone - £5.50, B zone (US/Canada/Far East) £7.50, C zone (Austr/NZ) £10.50. Sea mail to all - £4.00. U.S. members can pay in US dollars (Please check current exchange rate with a bank before sending). (Ed... after spending four hours sorting out the envelopes when taking over her new post, Membership Secretary Nicola has decreed that anyone sending envelopes too small to fit the newsletter into will be sent to Cygnus Alpha on a one-way ticket.)

We also appreciate all renewers completing the current renewal questionnaire, even if you've filled in one (or more) previously. It does help us to try to give you what you want from your Club. And **PLEASE remember to send Nicola any change of address**, preferably on the correct number of sticky labels to be stuck on your envelopes, if you can get hold of any. Thanks. (Stickers only necessary for UK people).

Overseas people - if you have any queries you would like answered, please send an appropriately sized self addressed envelope, plus 2 international reply coupons, or English postage stamps (unused) or even some money. Sterling or dollar bills accepted. It costs us a minimum of 35p to send a one word answer, and if it is several forms/lists you are wanting, costs us closer to £1 so we do ask you to help us with postage costs, especially as there are now so many of you.

With the cost of printing spiralling ever upwards, and with the newsletters getting longer and longer, it looks like we're going to have to raise the price of membership from £5 to either £5.50 or £6 (plus postage, of course) for your 4 newsletters. Strictly speaking we should increase it from now, but as this is our 10th Birthday Issue, all you lucky folk receiving your Renewal X now can still renew at the old price, and we'll put the price up next time. We do hate to do this, but we hope you'll all understand the budgeting necessities, and feel that Horizon is still value for money.

HORIZON NEWSFLASH SERVICE

For those of you somewhat frustrated with the long gaps between official newsletters (this one being no exception), this scheme helps you keep in touch with any cast news, con news, club news, etc., and of course lets you know that Horizon is still alive and kicking (or at least that Nicola and Mary are!)

TO Join THE SCHEME - send DIRECT TO MARY MOULDEN 4 ordinary sized stamped, self addressed envelopes (UK) PLUS a cheque or PO payable to Horizon for 50p. 50ps worth of unused UK stamps will be accepted for this also, or even cash (at your own risk). This will entitle you to 4 newsflashes (Mary will let you know when she needs more envelopes and money from you). We will be issuing them whenever anything we think will be of interest occurs, but certainly 2 and possibly more will be sent out between newsletters. If you know of anything of interest happening (cast appearances, etc.) let Mary know so she can include it.

OVERSEAS MEMBERS - please send Mary 4 self-addressed envelopes (preferably air mail envelopes) plus sufficient funds to cover your 50p subscription AND the postage on the bulletins. Postage on a 10 gram letter is 32p to the USA or 35p to Australia/NZ. A one-page bulletin in an envelope just about scrapes by at 10 gms, but if you want to save on the weight and avoid risking surcharges, you could use smallish envelopes, 6"x4" will be OK, or the special air mail ones. If you can get hold of British cash, stamps or postal orders, this

would be the simplest way to pay. IRCs are OK but expensive, as each coupon is only worth 22p to us. **IMPORTANT:** if you send IRCs make sure that they are stamped by the Post Office where you buy them otherwise we can't exchange them. We can also accept US dollar cheques made out to 'HORIZON, the B7 Appreciation Society'. The cost in sterling for US members would be £1.75 - \$3.20 should cover costs at the current exchange rate (around 1.65)

One final point: we try to be accurate with the newsflashes, but mistakes can happen, and plans can get changed at short notice. If you intend spending time and money going to an event, please check first with the box office or organiser to make sure we got it right! When RENEWING flash subscription, do remind Mary you're already a member of the scheme. We hope you find this service useful. Thanks.

CLUB NEWS

as related by your Club Secretary, Diane Gies.

This is the section where we ramble on about what your Committee has been up to and why the N/L is so late (for a change!) and what new, exciting clubby things have been happening since the last N/L.

COMMITTEE NEWS:

Quite a lot has been going on, some of it good, some not so good. For my part, anyone who has been waiting for me to do anything has probably started collecting their old age pension. Unfortunately, my poor long suffering (and B7 hating) husband Alec was rushed off to hospital in February for a rather nasty back operation. Thank God he is on the mend now and able to get about fairly well, but for the last 2 months was unable to walk properly, sit on a chair for more than 5 minutes at a time, drive or lift anything heavier than a newspaper (certainly not a 70 page Horizon N/L!) Trying to organise Horizon therefore took rather a back seat behind looking after him, plus new baby Sarah (now almost a year old and into EVERYTHING!) and Natalie, so my apologies for anyone still waiting for things to be done. I'd personally like to thank all you out there who have kindly wished him well, and I'd also like to thank my committee who have all rallied round splendidly to take on some of my work as well as their own. I'd especially like to thank Jackie for dashing back and forth between my place (London) and her place (Manchester) and doing all my typing, editing, etc. This N/L would be the Xmas 1990 issue instead of spring if it hadn't been for her. Thanks.

In between doing all my work, Jackie has been attending loads of conventions, (and **not** attending others, see review elsewhere in this N/L!!), and working very hard. Her bosses at Granada obviously thought she deserved a break, because they've just assigned her to work on the new 'Sherlock Holmes' with Jeremy Brett -doubtless many envious ladies are sticking pins into a Jackie dolly at this moment...

Juliette has been on a short holiday for 5 weeks to India (which she tells me was **incredible**) and returned at the beginning of May to a pile of photo orders. She also received some Horizon membership renewals, which was pretty irritating as **these should be going to Nicola Best.... please remember, folks!** Nicola, in the meantime, has very thoughtlessly moved house (well, flat!) Just when we had 5,000 membership flyers sent out with the Comet Liberator kits with her old address, she goes and moves. The good news, though, is that she can now provide an alternative meeting venue so we now have London meetings split between my place in Wembley (North London), her place (centre of London), Cathy & Paul Holroyd (Thamesmead, South London) and Heather Lulham (Ashford, Middlesex - not far from Heathrow). Despite her move, Nic has proved to be a mega-efficient membership secretary (obviously being a Librarian has its uses!) and is coping brilliantly with the floods of new members.

Ann Steele is gradually getting up to date with zine and script orders, and would like to send her congratulations to Denise Boghosian of the USA. Denise has the dubious honour of being the member who has been waiting longest for an order to be completed (18 months for a copy of 'Port in a Storm') and runner up is Jo Ann McCoy of the USA, waiting 15 months for 'Horizons 1+8'... unless of course, you know different! (See, ladies, we hadn't forgotten you... they're **almost** ready now - just don't hold your breath!!)

Fliss is doing an excellent publicity job, getting Horizon & B7 mentioned in the most unlikely places, whilst improving her considerable artistic talents in leaps and bounds (see Horizon 14, The Epic and Hotel Room Signs at Space City!!) Mary, Val & Rosemarie are still beavering away, and Kevin & Steve are getting used to being outnumbered by a group of Seska ordering them about.

Unfortunately, due to technical problems, Mark isn't able to do any more laser printing or typesetting for us, so Rosemarie has had to give me a crash course in typesetting and with her truly expert guidance, hopefully this newsletter will not look too awful. And I'll have more time to practice for the next one, as this one was a rather last minute surprise! Special thanks to Rosemarie here for patience and expertise above and beyond the call of duty.

Many of you out there still remember my sister Sharon Eckman, Horizon's first ever Correspondence/Publicity Officer. Whilst still retaining an interest in fandom, and in Horizon, Sharon is now 'in the profession' herself and in the last couple of years has been making quite a name for herself as a singer. A few people wrote to me recently after trips to Farnham to see the Darrows in 'Trap for a Lonely Man' asking if it was 'my' Sharon Eckman whose name and face appeared on posters at the theatre for a couple of weeks after 'Trap' ended. Yes, it was, and thanks for your interest. And I am delighted to shamelessly plug her next concert in case anyone wants to go (call Diane Gies for tickets, I'll be arranging a block booking for any Horizon people who want to join Jackie, Nicola and myself on the night). Anyway, it's called 'Magic of the Musicals' starring Denis Quilley, Elisabeth Welch, Simon Green and of course Sharon, and is presented by David Jacobs, and accompanied by the Grant Hossack Concert Orchestra. Venue is the Royal Festival Hall on Sunday 22nd July, 7.30pm. It's going to be a great show, hope some of you can come.

Rogers

P.S. Re the concert - just heard that Jan Chappell will be joining us, and other 'Honoraries' have also been invited.

WHO DOES WHAT??!! - the 'easy guide to ordering/submitting/communicating with the Club':

DIANE GIES - Anything at all to go in the N/L (**except** adverts & con news) Basically: LOCs, theatre/con/TV/Book/zine reviews, articles, suggestions, pen pals, regional meetings. Orders for zine 'The Web'.

JACKIE OPHIR - all fiction, all artwork. Complaints and queries. Wholesale merchandise enquiries (ie. bulk zine orders - for a group/club/convention/shop). Northwest Regional Meeting queries, offers of WPing or stuffing help.

NICOLA BEST - membership renewals, membership queries, change of address notification.

ANN STEELE - zine orders, back N/L orders, script orders, ads to go in Orac's Oddments or B7 Club, Dealer or Convention section. Badge orders.

JULIETTE CHRISTUSKI - photo orders, badge orders.

STEVE HAINES - orders for photo stamps, key rings, sticker slogans, Christmas cards, badges, Tim Pieraccini portraits, 9" model Liberator Kits, mugs, UK & USA stamp service.

MARY MOULDEN - newflash subscriptions, info to go in newflashes.

FLISS & KEVIN DAVIES - info on B7 related items in the media. Queries on reciprocal memberships (ie. XXX B7 Club sends us their stuff, we send them ours.) Publicity suggestions.

CLUB MERCHANDISE

We are delighted with our new Horizon Mugs and hope members will enjoy drinking their adrenalin and soma in them. Also with us are The Epic, Horizon 14 and the amazing Technical Manual Part 2 (which really **does** tell you where the toilets are on the Liberator!). We were thinking of having a Horizon Club T Shirt available for our 10th Birthday, but couldn't agree on the final design. We rather thought it might be nice to have it the same as the mugs with our 'new' 10th birthday slogan (with apologies to Vila Restal) "We're going to live forever, or die trying..." on the back. What do **you** think? And should we have black T shirts with white or silver artwork, or white T shirts with black artwork? And then there is the problem with sizes - small, medium, large, extra large, childrens, etc. We are almost certainly going ahead with T shirts in the near future, so some feedback would be very helpful - to Jackie Ophir, please.

HEATHER LULHAM

Those of you who have been members for a while will remember Heather, who was Club Treasurer, Correspondence Secretary and London meeting holder for several years (1982/88), and of course was Treasurer of the B7 10th Anniversary Charity Appeal. Sadly, her elder son, Marcus - aged 10, was killed at the beginning of January in a road accident. We are sure that you will all want to join the committee in offering her and her family our deepest sympathy on their tragic loss.

Via our newflash and various meetings, many of you have already heard of Marcus' death, and Heather has asked me to thank everybody who has written to her or telephoned with their condolences. She has asked me to pass on the following message: "I apologise for not writing back to you all but obviously I was in shock for a while and later on it was just too painful writing individual letters about the events of the accident when my husband Mike and I were trying to cope with it all. However, all your letters **did** help us very much, just reading them and knowing people cared and were thinking of us was very comforting and very much appreciated. It was nice to see people at Elydore and I look forward to seeing more people at the 7½ Convention in August, and at future Horizon meetings. When you do see me, please don't be afraid of not knowing what to say. I don't expect you to say anything about it now, and just having an ordinary conversation helps us to cope with things and carry on with our lives."

Heather asked people at the time not to send flowers but suggested that friends may like to donate some money instead to the Accident and Emergency Trust Fund at the hospital where Marcus was taken. Although there was nothing that could be done for him, she says the hospital staff were all very supportive and they are saving up for a special scanner that may help other children in the future. I have been making a collection for the hospital and thank those of you who have already sent some money. There is about £100 left in the Anniversary Appeal Charity account (after the presentation and expenses such as postage, tapes, etc.) and Judith and I will be adding this to any money collected for the hospital. If anyone out there would like to donate anything, however small an amount, please send to Diane Gies as soon as possible - cheques (sterling only) payable to 'The Accident and Emergency Trust Fund'. I will be presenting the total amount collected to the hospital later in the year in Marcus' memory, and will let you know the total raised. Thank you.

HELP REGISTER - occasionally we would be very grateful for some extra Assistance... especially at "newsletter stuffing into envelopes" time. If anyone feels they would like to volunteer for "occasional stuffing duty", please contact Jackie Ophir with name and phone no. These things are usually last minute notification, so obviously we won't blame you if you can't make it when we phone, but a register of potential helpers would be useful. You'd need to be able to get to Diane's or Jackie's house, which is where "stuffing" takes place!

WORD PROCESSING TYPING ASSISTANCE - We have a backlog of typing at the moment, so we are looking for fast, accurate word processor owners/users to volunteer to do some for us. If you'd like to volunteer, contact Jackie and she'll tell you what we need. We only want volunteers who are fast & accurate, and have a pretty good knowledge of spelling and punctuation. Although the work is basically copy typing, what you're copying from may have spelling/punctuation errors (zine submissions, for example) and if you can't correct them as you're typing them up, it's a pretty laborious task for us to proof read if there's a mistake on every line!!

THANKS - we'd like to thank Helen Gerald for lots of typing/WPing, and Ros Williams for proof reading, and also Jacqueline Rachel for her WPing too, although it turns out the machines didn't like each other much!!

HAPPY EVENTS

So many of you commented on the Pacey Twins picture in the last newsletter (along the lines of "gorgeous", "adorable", "cute" and "gosh, don't they look like their Dad.") Laura and Jessica will be celebrating their first birthday around the time you receive this and we all wish them a happy one. Perhaps Daddy will let us print some 'growing up' photos in the future.

In N/L 23 we reported that Glynis Barber and Michael Brandon were married last November. Following the Horizon tradition of celebrating our Honoraries' specially happy events, we sent them a little gift (a very nice artificial plant arrangement in a basket), and Glynis has written to thank us all for the gift and our good wishes.

ANONYMOUS ARTICLES - We welcome all contributions to the newsletter, but Horizon policy is not to publish anything if we don't know who sent it. We're happy to credit the article under an assumed/pen name for you if you want, but WE must know who you are, please. This doesn't apply to anything unpleasant (personal attacks, etc.) which we won't publish anyway.

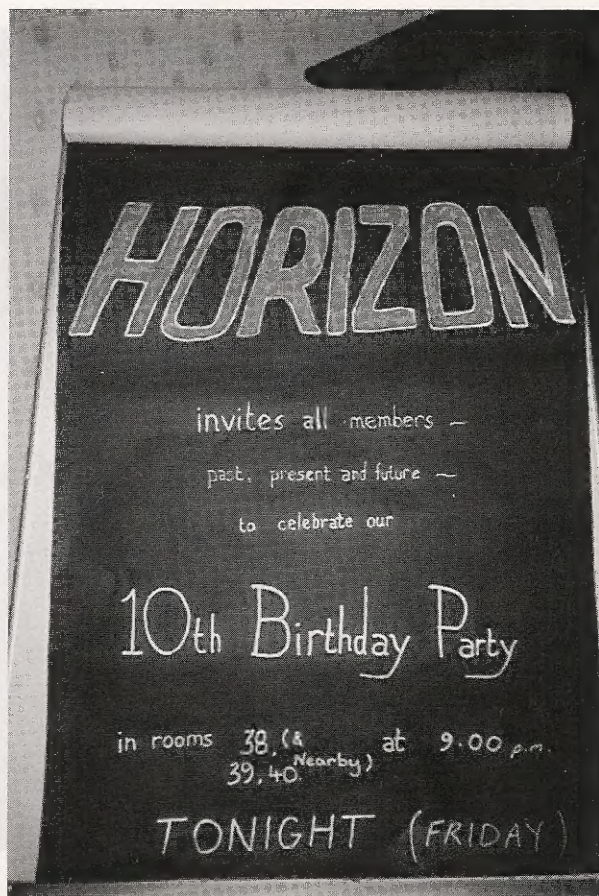
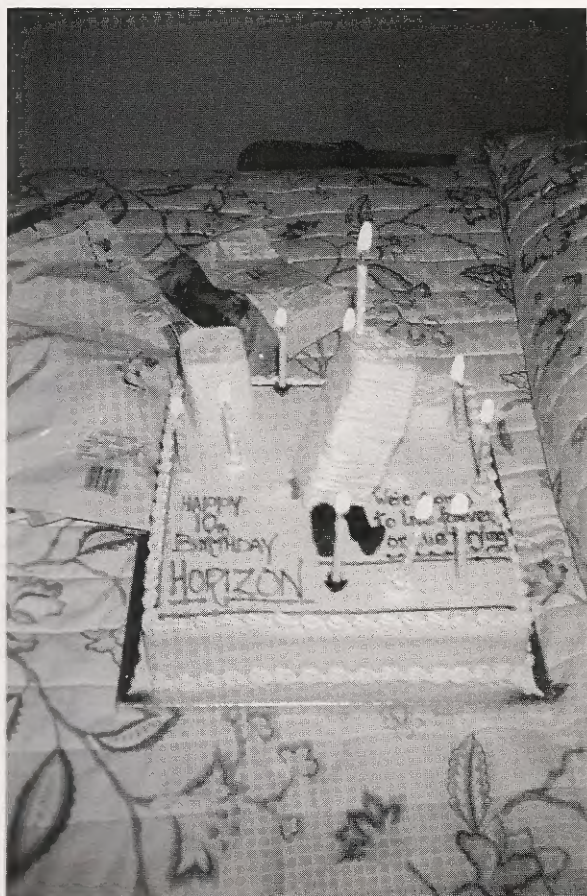
CONVENTIONS

Apart from seeing many of you at the London and Regional Meetings, Horizon (well, some of us) can often be found at assorted UK and overseas conventions. We always like to meet our members (and possible future members) to chat, put faces to names, (and of course to sell you things!!) When we deal at American conventions, the cost of purchasing zines/memberships/merchandise is a bit less than ordering through the mail (and infinitely quicker!) although we still have to pay to cart the stuff out with us. Therefore, you may find advance notice of our intended Dealing Venues of benefit. We plan to have stuff to sell at Orbit (Newark) in August 1990 although we're not sure who, or how many of us, will be able to go. If I win the pools I'll be off to Kathy Hanson's Confederation 2 in New Zealand - sounds wonderful. Talking of conventions, I've just come back from Space City in Chester and although we haven't time or space to fit any reviews/photos in this newsletter I thought I'd just give you a quick mention to whet your appetite. I certainly had a good time, and as far as I could see, so did everybody else. The atmosphere was great, people were very friendly, and everything ran very smoothly. Chester itself is very pretty and the hotel was very nice too - especially the pool, jacuzzi (heaven!!) and pool bar. The bad points on the hotel would be the stairs (lots of them - to get ANYWHERE - tricky with a buggy!) and the majority of the waiters/waitresses in the main restaurant (one middle aged lady I'm sure had a PhD in surliness!). Apart from some double-booking by the hotel, (surprising a few people on check in with unknown room-mates when they'd thought they had a single room!) everything else seemed to go very well, and I must congratulate the committee on an enjoyable convention. The final guest list was Paul and Janet Darrow, and Peter Tuddenham. All were on great form and their tireless efforts to make sure the con attendees had a great time was much appreciated. Paul was always one of the last to get to bed as he stayed up until the early hours talking to fans and playing Trivial Pursuit.

That weekend was, of course, Horizon's 10th birthday and we had a room party (or rather a several rooms and the corridor party) on the Friday night which was enjoyed by all. The Avon club will also be celebrating its 10th birthday later in the year, and they had a 10th birthday disco on the Saturday night. The disco started off with a load of Elvis and general rock 'n roll records which had all the guests joining in merrily and was great fun. The highlights of the fancy dress competition were Roberta Roe as Franken-Avon (which had to be seen to be believed) and the Floor Show of our own Mary Moulden, and Kathy Hanson as a pair of disreputable 'ladies of the night' singing an amazingly witty and bawdy song - a great incentive to rush off and buy the videos! Sunday's highlight was definitely the childrens fancy dress - starring baby Sarah Servalan. Sarah and Janet got on very well although Janet was a little worried that I might have stapled her silver earrings on so she had to check... luckily, I'd made do with sellotape! Sarah won 2 packets of Smarties (which I ate - she's too young to eat smarties, and I was a bit peckish!) and looked exceptionally sweet.

Anyway, reviews and photos to follow in the next N/L, and hopefully news of when the next Space City will be. In the meantime, here are some photos of the 10th Birthday Party, & Space City to whet your appetites!

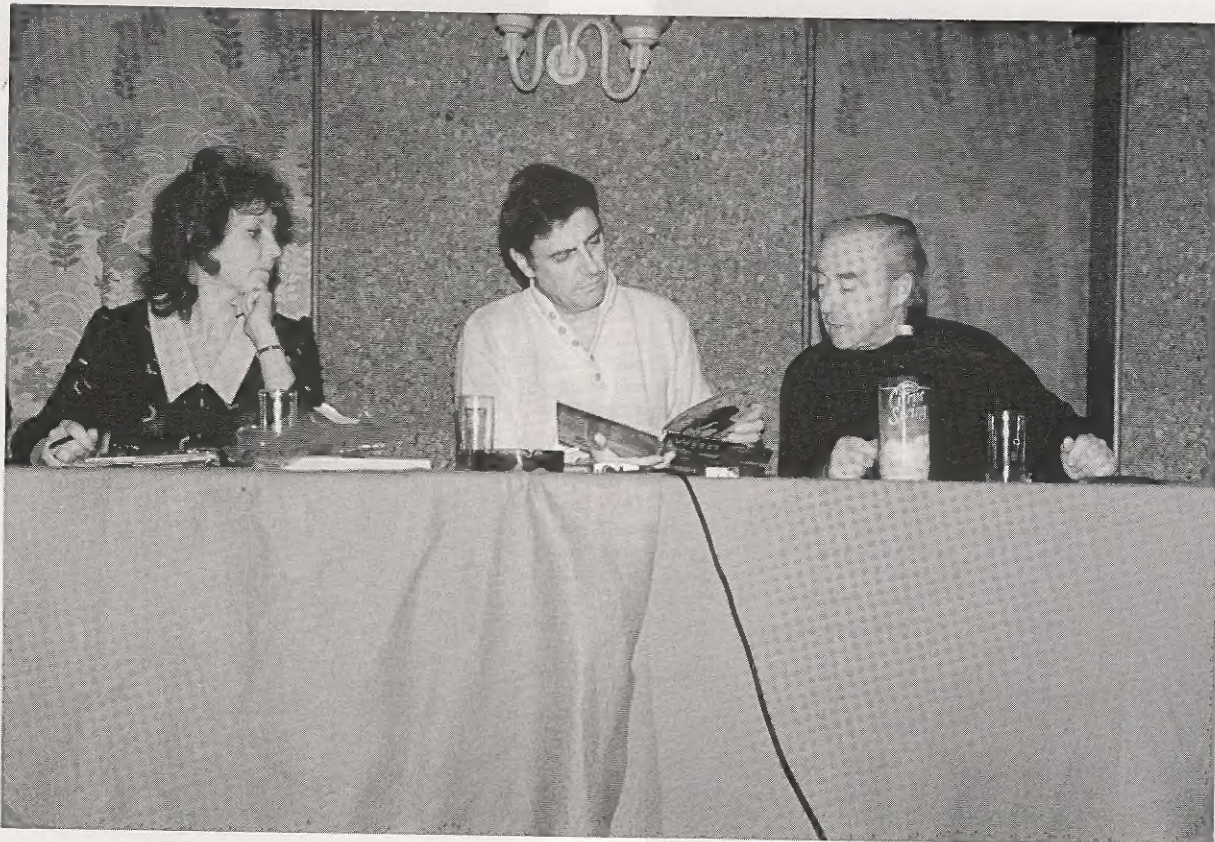
BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATION AND CAKE - photos by Jackie Ophir



PAUL DARROW outside the hotel - taken by Diane Gies



PAUL DARROW, JANET LEES PRICE AND PETER TUDDENHAM at Space City - taken by Diane Gies



HAPPY 10TH BIRTHDAY HORIZON!

by Diane Gies

In the last newsletter we mentioned that it was coming up to our 10th Birthday, and listed the members who had been with us non-stop since 'The Beginning'. I decided to research my facts more carefully and discovered that the Space City 1990 convention was the exact weekend of our Birthday. Accordingly, I hastily organised a 10th Birthday Party to take place on the Friday night at the hotel, and dashed off to the Cash and Carry to buy up a couple of cases of wine, crisps, soft drinks and assorted other goodies. I then came up against a slight problem - which was that with the number of people likely to be popping in, we needed more than one room to fit them all in. I couldn't use my own as I had baby Sarah with me and she'd be sleeping there. We then had to find 2 rooms next door to each other with their owners both willing to host the Horizon party. Frantic negotiations eventually resulted in rooms 38, 39, 40 and 41 being volunteered - grateful thanks to Crystal Denton, Barbara Eidinger, Ben Clements & Janet Ellicott. In fact we got 2 rooms, then people on either side said "Oh, you can use mine too." Really it was just as well because it seemed that almost everyone already at the hotel turned up during the course of the party, which ended up in the 4 rooms, the corridor and half way down the stairs. We had some music, and loads of wine and food - and I want to say a special thank you here to Roberta Roe who bought up most of Marks & Spencer's food hall for the party. Roberta also arranged the 'Birthday Sub Plot'... Not only is Henry Eggleton Horizon Member No. 54, with us since the VERY VERY BEGINNING, he has the dubious honour of sharing his birthday with ours. Roberta planned a surprise party for his 30th and poor Henry was horribly embarrassed when we all sang Happy Birthday to him, and presented him with a cake depicting Henry/Avon in chains with the slogan "To the cutest slave in the galaxy." (See Blake-ation 1 report in previous N/L for explanation!!) Our own cake depicted me lying prostrate on the ground covered with a gigantic pile of unanswered mail, all marked 'Urgent'. Peter and Rosie Tuddenham popped in for a while to celebrate with us, and birthday cake was despatched to the Darrows and the con committee who were downstairs finalising various con activities for the weekend.

Some photos of the happy event should be on the previous page, and here are some good wishes from some very special people.

HORIZON

To All

Congratulations!

Thank you all for your
expertise, your joy and
above all, your dedication!
All our "authors" can say
is THANK YOU 10 YEARS
OVER (AND 10 YEARS MORE?)
GARETH

Calling The Horizon Club!!

Best wishes and a
Very Happy Birthday to you all!
and that includes the hardworking
committee who regularly publish a
superb newsletter.

Good luck to you, our
faithful fans for over a decade.
we appreciate you!

This message is also from
Zen, orac, - Slave and is definitely
'Confirmed' by me!

John Tuddenham

"A very Happy Birthday
HORIZON - to all who so
dedicatedly run Horizon and
all it's supporters - I can't
believe BLUES 7 could continue
like this, for so long!
Love from Jan.

Happy Birthday, Horizon
and best wishes to all those
who've worked so hard over
the last ten years.
Shedagh J. Wells.

Greetings to all Horizon members,
Congratulations on reaching the end of your first decade : hope you go
from strength to strength unhindered by limiter implants!
All best wishes,

David Jackson

David Jackson

To Horizon Members.

Congratulations on your first decade.
What odds will you get on the
BBC speaking "Blues 7" by
Sarah's Kent birthday?
May good fortune smile upon you all.

With love.

Jan. Paul

Embassy Hotels

Dear Horizon,
Happy 10th Anniversary
and thank you for keeping Blues 7
so popular.

Lots of love
from the Man with
few words

Michael

Keating Actor
Extraordinary

To celebrate our birthday, instead of people giving us presents (although you are welcome to, if you like!!!) we decided to give some out. Accordingly, all our Honorary Members have received, or will receive as soon as possible, a Horizon Mug. Michael, Paul, Janet and Peter have already received theirs, and seemed to think they were rather nice. And we thought our first 10 ever members who still remain with us deserved a reward too... and we are delighted to offer Free Life Membership of the Club to: Robert Cheadle (No. 2), Keith Davis (No. 4), Alan Simmons (No. 19), Karen Langley (No. 26), Kevin Morris (No. 42), Owen Carpanini (No. 50), Henry Eggleton (No. 54), Donald Savage (No. 68), Mary Frost (No. 77) and Bill Lindsay (No. 81). Yvette Clarke (No. 35) and Carol Keogh (No. 36) already receive free N/Ls on Club Reciprocal Basis. Thanks for sticking with us for all these years - now you're stuck with us forever!!

HOW IT ALL BEGAN... A few weeks ago I received a letter from Carol Keogh (No. 36) reminiscing about the very first informal meeting between a group of fans and some of the cast... the earliest B7 'con' if you like! It was in late summer 1978, the venue - the flat of our Club Founder Pat Thomas, and GOHs were Michael Keating and David Jackson. It's a lovely little story, with suspense (will they turn up), humour (no comment) and a romantic fairytale happy ending... I was going to print the tale in this N/L, but there wasn't space, and also I thought it would be nice to add this to a few other 'Reminiscences from the Early Days'. Can I therefore ask any of you who have been around right from the beginning of B7 UK fandom to send me in any little anecdotes and facts that you can remember so we can share them with our newer members (some of whom were barely out of nappies when this was all happening!) Along with Carol's article, I already have a matching one dictated by Michael Keating (an incentive to renew if ever there was one...) I mentioned Carol's story to Michael and he said "Oh yes, I remember that day VERY well..." and proceeded to tell me all about it from his viewpoint. Both memories of the event will be in the next N/L, and hopefully many more.

Those of you wanting to know how B7 fandom (and Horizon in particular) started will have to order back Newsletter 18 and read the fascinating article by Pat Thomas, as there isn't room to reprint it here, but I managed to track Pat down in the wilds of California and coerced her into producing a 10th Birthday Editorial for us as follows:

BIRTHDAY EDITORIAL FROM HORIZON FOUNDER & PRESIDENT - PAT THOMAS

Welcome members to earthquake country from your reclusive El Presidente. I am doing well after mentally surviving my third earthquake, so now I know I am truly insane! I wanted to start with some correspondence notes (i.e. editorials or lectures if you like) again, after taking a much needed time out from Fandom. After the shock of actually calculating the age of Horizon, I realised I have achieved that prized level of Fandom, which is called the OLF. OLF stands for Old Ladies of Fandom, i.e. the real survivors after 10 or more years of service on the front line... but they were good ones!

First the facts; I am doing well and living in the only sane city in the Los Angeles Basin - Long Beach, where the liner Queen Mary is safely kept. I had to have a little piece of Britain nearby! I left the Navy when I came over and am now (gasp from Diane) a word processor operator. I have found a few fans in this area, but I've been involved in returning to civilian life. But now the Fandom fever is back and I haven't changed, I'm still making trouble like always. It is one of the few pleasures of running a club. But seriously folks, I miss you all like crazy and it's great, if frustrating because of the distances, to be back in touch again. So... it's been 10 years and I still don't believe it. I'm glad we all made it; it's been a real adventure. Ten years ago I had a small idea and a great deal of ambition about having the greatest fan club in the world. The first decade has gone by and it is truly amazing to see what has actually happened versus my small dream seances. I don't think we have the greatest club in the world (...Ed: yet!!) but we do have the greatest fan club members. That fact alone sustained me personally through the good and bad patches we all have had to go through in life.

I had never attempted to manage a fan club, or even been much involved in fan clubs before Horizon, so I didn't really have much idea of what we were taking on. Now I can see that that was a bit of a blessing for not only didn't I know how much really **hard** work is involved in a 'little' club, but more importantly I had to go by gut instinct for what a fan club is. I think the most important purpose of a club is to form connections between all of the widely-scattered members in order to find a little pleasure and fun; between the members of the fan club and the actors and to give them a real chance to connect with the viewers and getting a true reading of how their performances are coming over - a literal exam of sorts. A connection for the neglected production staff and writers is often ignored by the fans in the mad rush for the more visual actors. Also, a much needed connection between the many, multi-talented fan writers, artists and convention organisers which should be brought together, and whose talents can be show-cased in an appreciative arena. These Connections in the multi-leveled fandom was what I wanted to bring together, and after all this time I feel the greatest satisfaction of accomplishment in having been a part of this great process in B7 Fandom.

Of course there are times of strain and stress, because we are all highly intelligent, strong-minded individuals; (we must be to survive the mundane world and its ridicule) and that is a natural recipe for dissention. Being an OLF, I can smile serenely, but truly I have seen all this before. Sometimes things turn out OK, but sometimes, because of circumstances and because people change, things don't. I often see newcomers confused by this, and some OLFs will get burned out. So, for Part 1 of my Ten Years of Horizon & the lengthy comments & queries, let me throw some water on the oil fire I see developing in B7 Fandom. The comments below (& indeed above) are strictly **mine**, not the committee's.

I wanted to make some very frank statements and comments of how I see things that are going on from the relatively safe distances of La La Land. First and foremost I have some concern over an apparent schism forming between some British and American Fandoms. When I read about how some trouble is caused by 'the Americans' and British fandoms that is so much more balanced by inversion, I wonder about where this superior attitude is coming from. By the way, I should

point out that I am an American, so I may have built-in biases, but I have always felt that that should be an irrelevant fact. The true fact is that some American fans have caused problems, which is unfortunate, but it happens. Most of you weren't around ten years ago in B7, but we did have some major problems with some British fans. The plain fact is that when you group diverse personalities, some strange things will happen. In the early days, we tried and were occasionally successful at diverting some major and minor disasters at various British conventions. The American problem seems larger only because of the large scale involved. What I want to avoid is the 'us' and 'them' mentality which I am seeing in Letters of Comment. I hope we are all B7 fans together, I didn't care that it was a British TV show except for the fact that I knew it would be hard for the show to be seen in other countries. Generally, American shows have a much larger international audience and I wanted everyone to see this great programme. I am certainly glad I was one of the ones behind the push to get the show seen in America. A gem is not beautiful sitting inside a little box in a dark safe in a closed vault; it should be on display where everyone can see and admire it. Surely it wouldn't have been better to have no-one else see it beyond the borders of Anglia?

Or perhaps I am wrong, if so tell me! I would hate to think that that was the case, but I am above all a realist. That was one reason why I loved this programme - its realistic tone. I don't mean to stir up another controversy, but I feel we should watch ourselves being influenced by hidden prejudices. So this is my new challenge for Part One of my Horizon article. What do all of you out there think? I'll see you in Part 2 for an update from the sunny shores of California.

Hi from Pat.

Back to Diane again...

For myself, I have enjoyed my years with the Club, and hope to carry on in some capacity or other for many more. Many weird and wonderful things have happened to me through running the club over the years, and I think the rest of the committee (past and present) would agree with that. Jackie suggested we do an article entitled "How Your Newsletter Gets To You" as some of the funniest (although not at the time) things happened at Newsletter Release time. So to end our Birthday article we have a couple of anecdotes to relate, which will doubtless put off anyone out there vaguely thinking of starting up a fan club!!

HOW TO POST NEWSLETTERS DURING A POSTAL STRIKE!

by Diane Gies

A couple of years back, the newsletter was late being printed (for a change) and I'd finally got them back from the printers just in time to send out before several vital bits of information contained in them became out of date when... North West London Post Office 'workers' came out on strike. Brilliant, here we are with 700 newsletters to post, all stamped and ready to go, but the letterboxes were all sealed up and the Post Offices weren't accepting any mail. The dispute actually STARTED in Wembley and Harrow, where I live, but everywhere else was OK. I decided to pack all the boxes of UK N/Ls into my car (about 10 giant boxes) and schlepp them over to Golders Green where I was going to visit my Mum. Unfortunately, the Post Office is on the busiest crossroads of the busiest main roads and you can't park anywhere near, so I had to park round the corner. Not far away, but far enough when you have 10 giant boxes to carry. There was no-one to help me, so I did a sort of stacking system, starting with 4 boxes and walking a few yards with one, leaving it on the pavement and going back for the next one, taking that a few yards further, etc. etc. After about 20 minutes I reached the Post Office and discovered that they had come out on strike 3 hours earlier. We will not dwell on the conversation which passed between myself & the counter clerks, but 20 minutes later I was back at my car with all 10 boxes, a backache and very high blood pressure.

Over the next couple of days, more and more areas started to strike. Each time I thought of somewhere to take the wretched N/Ls, and found a babysitter for Natalie, they would close up shop. None of the committee could help as half of them were on holiday, and the rest didn't have cars or their areas were on strike too. I didn't have time to drive far enough to beat the strike and was beginning to despair when someone told me that for some reason, Ealing (London W5) was accepting mail. Terrific, it's only 25 minutes drive away. I was told that the Ealing Main Post Office was in the centre of a busy shopping area, so I decided the best thing to do was go there in the evening, so I could park right outside and just shove them all in the letterbox. It had to be a main post office because they are too big to fit easily into an ordinary letterbox, and anyway you can't fit 600 newsletters into one box.

By the time I'd finished putting Natalie to bed and having supper it was 9.30pm. I set off in my car, having failed to persuade Alec to take them for me "But darling, they're ever so heavy..." "Forget it!". I followed my directions and finally discovered the Post Office - and 3 major problems. 1) It was in the centre of a plethora of pubs and restaurants, and there was nowhere to park. 2) It was on a one way street so I had to go round half of Ealing about 4 times before I could find a parking space more or less next to the Post Office. 3) It was set back from the road under a sort of semi-underground complex, surrounded by huge pillars. Very majestic. Also rather scary in a fairly unsalubrious area, frequented by drunks. And by this time it was 10.15pm. And very dark!

I got out of the car, and carried the first box over to the posting holes. Right underneath the holes, in the dark, I literally stumbled over two people. I have never been so embarrassed in all my life - they had picked this nice dark, quiet and hidden area to... well... how shall I put this... attempt procreation!! Luckily they still had most of their clothes on. (Well, it was quite cold out...) Anyway, I mumbled an embarrassed apology, dumped the box on the floor and proceeded to pull out dozens and dozens and dozens of envelopes from it and stuff them into the posting hole. The couple completely

ignored me and continued with their activities. (I can't believe I did this!!) Box empty, I picked it up and retreated. Two minutes later I was back with Box No. 2. And then No. 3. And then No. 4.... after about the 4th one they stopped what they were doing (thank God) and just watched me. It took over half an hour, by which time I had completely filled up the correct hole (there are separate ones for first and second class, and overseas) and in fact completely filled all three 'holes' - goodness knows what the collectors thought the next morning! As I loaded the last empty box into the car (about 11pm) the couple came out to the road to make sure I was really going. I turned and waved to them and called out "Goodbye" in typically polite English fashion. They paused for a moment, waved back to me, and then started to embrace, completely oblivious to the rest of the world again. I got home just before midnight, and vowed to resign the next day. That was about 3 years ago!!

* * * * *

"I can beat that," said Jackie. "No you can't," I replied. "We'll see. I'm going to write the first Non-Con review," she said. Now follows Jackie and Nicola's adventures NOT at Del-10. Let us know which of us is the crazier!!

WHAT WE DID INSTEAD OF DEL-10

A Non-Convention Review by Jackie Ophir

PROLOGUE:

Sending out the newsletters to our British members isn't much of a hassle. That is, apart from trundling up the dark and stormy M1 two days before Xmas, car loaded with boxes of newsletters and large brown envelopes - the Horizon Santa Claus! And apart from turning Boxing Day into Stuffing Day (and my living room into a shambles), aided by various stalwart North-Westerners!



Kevin and Steve - stuffing!



Stuffed!!

And apart from having to sort the envelopes into alphabetical order, and check them off the list, and make sure the ones due for renewal get the appropriate X and renewal questionnaire. And apart from having to phone Diane a few hours later and say: "Er... sorry, can't finish these - we've run out of newsletters!" (Which meant that those whose names began with W to Z got their newsletters later than the others... sorry, chaps). (...Ed. - We'll have to start from Z next time!) And apart from Steve Haines, in his enthusiasm at helping post them, actually forgetting to take his own copy! And apart from lugging 'em into the Mail Room at Granada ("Could you let me have two mail sacks, Jim?"). But APART from all that, it's a pretty simple operation.

NOW READ ON...

A dry, wintry afternoon, and I'm outdoors, squirting insulating foam into a gap between the front window frame and the wall. It's all frothing and bubbling nicely when the phone rings. Nicola. "Sit down," she says, in a Voice of Doom. I sit on my doorstep, watching the foam foam. "Del-10's been cancelled," she says. "And we can't un-book our air tickets!" Various explanations, recriminations and swear-words follow in rapid succession, and by the time we've talked each other out of committing suicide ("But whatever are we going to DO in Baltimore on New Year's Eve?") - it's getting dark outside. I leave the foam to its own devices and retire indoors in a deep state of gloom.

However, our American friends rally round superbly! Within hours I receive calls from Marsha Quinn ("Would you like to borrow my apartment in Manhattan?") and Elena Schuldes ("Would you like to come skiing with me in Vermont?"), while Nicola receives similar calls from Barbara Leflar Jackson and Tina Levine, inviting her to Delaware and Philadelphia! All offers are most gratefully accepted, and much cheered, I phone Diane to tell her the change of plans. Then, in a fit of utter lunacy, I say: "Well, Nicola and I can take the American newsletters and post them over there - Marsha's flat is only two minutes away from the New York Post Office." Never have words spoken in so much haste, with so much good-will, been the cause of so much aggravation!

The reality began to dawn on me and Nic, when we were actually packing. If you reckon that each newsletter weighs 300 grams = 11 ounces, multiply that by 200, you've got 60 kilos = 137 pounds = seven EXTREMELY heavy pieces of luggage! Our trip from London to New York (via Baltimore) was like something out of a silent movie. Seven heavy suitcases down seven flights of stairs (no lift!) from Nic's flat to the street. Into taxi, drive to Farringdon Station, out of taxi, count baggage. Into station, down three flights of stairs to platform. On to train, count baggage. Trundle down to Gatwick, de-dum de-da, suitcases blocking the aisles. We get filthy looks from other passengers and don't really care. Arrive at Gatwick, cases off train, count baggage - AARGH - only SIX pieces! Leap back onto train, grab last case. Into airport, security check, baggage check-in. Cases disappear down conveyor belt - oh, the relief! Lightened in body and mind, we enjoy the flight, and arrive in Baltimore fairly cheerful.

Baltimore. Welcome to the United States of America. Land of the Free, but you have to pay for the luggage trolleys. Seven heavy pieces of baggage have arrived down and safe (if slightly bashed), and we enlist the aid of a Sky-Cap porter to get them (and us) to a taxi. The taxi-driver is probably the surliest and most unhelpful person in the entire Universe, and (deliberately??) takes us to the wrong railway station - the one in Baltimore proper rather than the one near the airport. Doesn't help us unload the cases, and doesn't get a tip. We part with mutual loathing.

Baltimore Penn Station. An old, cold building. Our Seven Pieces of Luggage are loaded on to a luggage cart, but nobody's going anywhere yet, because all the trains have been delayed. Some unspecified fault on the line, some electrical problem, no trains. Terrific. We spend a while in the ticket office pondering the intricacies of Amtrak (it manages to make British Rail seem simple!), then sit on a wooden bench, among the drunks and the squawking children, and wait. Hours later, a train arrives. There is a mad dash to get on, but we are helped by two very friendly Red-Cap porters, who load us and our Seven Pieces of Luggage on to the train. There are no empty seats, but we are past caring.

New York Penn Station. About midnight (U.S. time), about 5.00 am (jet-lag time). Seven Pieces of Luggage counted off the train, Nic left to guard them while I go in search of a Red-Cap. There is a woman at an information desk. "Excuse me," I say, "Could you tell me where I can find a Red-Cap?" "No," she says, and walks away. Welcome to New York! I wander around, and see somebody official-looking going into a door marked PRIVATE. I follow him in, and find myself in a kind of dingy office. Somebody notices me, hurrah! I explain our plight, and a Red-Cap is promptly despatched to bring our Seven Pieces of Luggage up several escalators and flights of stairs, to a taxi. Luggage into taxi, a twenty second ride around the block, and we're at Marsha's apartment on West 30th Street. Luggage out of taxi, into building, into two lifts, out of two lifts, into the apartment... PHEW. In no fit state to do anything else, we collapse into bed, the suitcases standing sentinel around us.

A bright New York morning! And like every British visitor to New York, we're DYING to visit the Post Office! I mean, forget the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty, if you haven't seen the New York Post Office, you haven't lived! We discuss various plans of campaign. Can we bear the idea of shlepping the suitcases back down and to the Post Office? But at least we'd get rid of all the N/Ls in one go. Should we go there, buy all the stamps we need, and come back and stick all the stamps on in the apartment, and then post the newsletters in easy stages, taking a few every time we go out? But then we'd probably be doing nothing else all day. And dammit, IT'S NEW YEARS EVE!! We can actually see the Post Office from the window, and contemplate folding the N/Ls into aeroplanes and seeing if we can throw them there!

Eventually we settle on Plan A. We re-pack the newsletters into only (!) four suitcases, and set off. In the lobby, we meet some kind of caretaker/janitor/supervisor chap, and he volunteers his services to help us get the suitcases to the Post Office. He darts across the road to a grocery store and borrows a two-wheel cart - the kind used for transporting boxes of vegetables. After several false attempts, the cases are piled on, and we lurch precariously down the street. In the meantime, Nic and I are having misgivings about this chap, who seems to be somewhat the worse for drink. Our misgivings are confirmed, when we encounter another man, who asks if we're heading for the station. It's a reasonable enough question, given that we were walking in that direction with a pile of suitcases, but our chap retaliates with an astonishing stream of abuse! The two men get quite heated ("I know where you live, and I'll come and get you!" "I'll get you first - you can

run, but you can't hide!" - interspersed with the most appalling racial/sexual insults you can imagine). Nic and I shrink along behind them, wondering what would happen to the newsletters if these two actually came to blows. However, eventually the second man breezes off down a side street, leaving our chap hurling insults after him. Once the second man is out of ear-shot, our chap turns to us, and says, "You see? New York's a terrible place!"

We arrive at the Post Office - a grand white building, that looks like a museum, with impressive pillars and - oh God - dozens of steps leading up to the entrance! We recruit the aid of a couple of strong-armed (and heavily armed!) cops and - MADE IT!! The interior of the Post Office is cool marble, graced with a huge, tastefully-decorated Christmas tree. We sit down under the tree, and begin to open the cases (much to the astonishment of the other customers). I pick a newsletter at random, and go to the nearest clerk to ask how much it costs to send it. She confuses me briefly by talking about 1st class post and book post and this post and that post, but eventually we settle on Bound Printed Matter, which seemed right. \$1.56. Okay, fine - I'll have 200 stamps to that value! In fact, it takes four different stamps to make up that amount, but never mind.

I return with the sheaves of stamps to Nicola, and we sit on the floor, merrily licking and sticking. As soon as they're done, I take them in batches of ten to a back room, where I leave them on a table. On my third trip, I encounter a little woman, holding a newsletter in each hand and wearing an expression of deep perplexity. "Oh-oh," I think. "Is there a problem?" I ask. She explains that I've put on the wrong amount of stamps. One envelope is over-stamped, the other is under-stamped! How is that possible? The little lady explains: Bound Printed Matter costs a different amount, depending on where in the U.S. it's going! The price changes according to the Zip Code. Oh hell, we didn't know that. I dash quickly back to Nicola and tell her to stop, while we sort out all the ones we've done, figure out their zips and work out the different prices. Our little lady very helpfully lets me use the electronic scales, and the chart for quick calculations. Nic and I really get into the swing of it, obviously looking so authentic that other customers come to us with queries, assuming we worked there! By the time we finished the 200 newsletters we COULD have worked there - we no longer needed the scales and the chart - we knew the Zips and prices by heart!

It took all morning. It took half the afternoon. Our little lady went for lunch and returned, and we were still there, licking, sticking and swearing. But eventually all was done. The last newsletter went on its way, and so did we. Gathering up our blissfully empty cases, we bid a sweet farewell to the Post Office, and set off to begin our vacation at last. And as we stepped out on to the streets of Manhattan, although we felt fairly virtuous at having achieved our aim, and saved Horizon some money, we swore that we would NEVER, EVER, EVER do it again!!

Oh, and by the way, because I never finished the job that afternoon, my front wall looks like The Attack of The Killer Foam!

And all because Del-10 was cancelled...

BLAKE'S SEVEN - THE ADVERTS

by Gill Marsden

You have watched the series, you've read the novels, you've written the zines and you're (still) waiting for Series Five. Meanwhile, here they are: B7 - The Adverts!

1. A pair of hands are seen placing Orac on a tabletop. When the hands are removed, Orac lights up and buzzes to itself. It then abruptly falls silent as the hands come back and pick it up, and we see that the key is not inserted. Voice-over says mysteriously: *"Who knows the secret of the black magic box?"*
2. The Liberator's twin is seen to explode on Zen's view screen. Avon and Blake, who are watching, exchange worried looks. Before they can speak, the voiceover is heard: *"Commercial Union; we won't make a drama out of a crisis."*
3. Avon is seen putting on his 'leather' Series Four outfit. He looks at camera and says: *"Imperial Leather, one of life's little luxuries."*
4. Travis is seen wrapping himself in Shivan's bandages. When he has finished, a labrador puppy bounces up and starts pulling at a loose end. In a short time Travis is completely unwrapped again, and the puppy starts licking him. Voice over: *"Andrex - soft, strong and very, very long."*
5. Close up of Travis saying dramatically: "I am your death, Blake."
Voice over: *"Calvin Klein's Obsession - for men."*

6. Servalan smiling as she looks down at Avon, saying: "I wish my slave to address me as mistress."
Voice over: "*Calvin Klein's Obsession - for women.*"

7. Jenna is seen striding along one of the Liberator's corridors. As she goes, she tosses away her teleport bracelet, her gun, and then her holster and finally screws up a picture of Blake and drops it into a waste disposal chute. She arrives on the flight deck and sits in the pilot's position and pulls a key from her pocket. The Liberator is seen from the outside to speed away.

Voice over: "*DSV 2 - once driven, forever smitten*"

(*...Jac.- actually, I think the voice over should be "DSV 2 - it's nice to have something you can rely on" - I actually had this advert in mind (the real one, that is) when I bought my present car...*)

8. A woman is seen whispering into Bran Foster's ear, "Do you know how to free us all from the tyranny of the Federation and make us all free again?"

To which Foster replies, "*No, but I know a man who does.*"

9. Vila leans back in a comfy chair, with a glass in his hand. He looks over at Orac and says, "Let's talk about you. Then again, let's not bother."

10. Servalan is seen in her boudoir putting the finishing touches to her make-up. She picks up her perfume bottle and we catch a glimpse of movement behind her. She sprays on liberal quantities of perfume, turns around and fires the gun in her hand. The camera then shows the bloody mess of the man she has killed lying at her feet. The camera then closes in on Servalan's sweetly smiling face.

Voice over: "*The President of the Terran Federation: not perfumed, not coloured, just kind...*"

SO YOU WANT TO JOIN THE FEDERATION SPACE ACADEMY?

by Rory Hull

Visit new worlds, from the tropical world of Palmero to the battle-torn world of Helotrix, the sun-drenched world of Zondor to the sandy dunes of Virn. Test your skill and judgement on the following multi-choice questions to see if you are good enough to join the elite ranks of the F.S.A.

1. Observation round: Watch the opening titles to any episode from the 1st/2nd season before going direct to question 23.
2. You are on duty at an interrogation centre on a cold, icy planet, guarding a woman resistance leader. Suddenly you discover the centre has been infiltrated by a famous resistance group. Do you...
 - a) Ask for the leader's name and authority?
 - b) Ask for their autographs?
 - c) Walk past them, knowing your gun fires blanks?
3. You are on reception duty at Space Command HQ, when Space Commander Travis arrives for an urgent appointment with the Supreme Commander. His I.D. card has not been changed since his facial injury. Do you...
 - a) Check his qualifications on your computer console before allowing him access?
 - b) Let him through with a warning, knowing he'll get past you anyway?
 - c) Tell him that he looks nothing like his I.D.?
4. Which of the following space craft would you most like to commandeer after the completion of your duty? Would it be...
 - a) The Liberator?
 - b) Space Command HQ?
 - c) The Jupiter Two?
5. You are on static duty at the top security installation on the planet Centro, when a rebel approaches you and asks for something suitable to sabotage. Would you...
 - a) Arrest him on the spot, then inform control?
 - b) Assist him in every way possible, inform him of the whereabouts of the security robots and surveillance cameras?
 - c) Try to persuade him that destruction of property is not the way... peaceful protesting is best?
6. Once you have qualified as an officer of the F.S.A., which of the following would you NOT fraternize with...?
 - a) Rebels?
 - b) Federation Personnel?
 - c) 'Neighbours' fans?

7. You are on duty at Central Intelligence Control, when you receive a message from Commissioner Sleer regarding a project which is coded XX. What does the double-X code mean?
 - a) Nothing recorded/Oral only?
 - b) Secret kisses sent between Avon and Servalan?
 - c) Half a can of a well-known beer?
8. You and your platoon have just completed an arduous tour of duty and have now returned to 'civilisation' at some space-port bar. Suddenly, a bar-room brawl develops between your platoon and four other men in the bar - namely, Gan, Gun-Sar, Gola and his brother Rod. Would you...
 - a) Make a tactical withdrawal?
 - b) Hope you go blind drinking Vetizade so as not to witness the defeat of your platoon?
 - c) Insist on a good clean fight?
9. You are on duty on the planet Fosforon, when, with the approach of K47 you receive the following antiquated message: Bravo, Romeo, India, November, Golf... Bravo, Alpha, Charley, Kilo... Bravo, Lima, Alpha, Kilo, Echo, Sierra... Sierra, Echo, Victor, Echo, November. Can you decipher it?
 - a) Yes.
 - b) I'll wait until the Federation decodes it.
 - c) I can't be bothered.
10. Assume you are a Space Commander, and have devised a plan to board the Liberator by disguising yourself as Shivan, a one-time legendary guerilla leader, now heavily bandaged. Would you...
 - a) Gain control of the ship's master computer, then take the Liberator to Space Command HQ?
 - b) Gloat because you are the first Space Commander ever to capture the Liberator - only to teleport off again shortly afterwards?
 - c) Join a first-aid course?
11. Memory question: What was unusual about the Federation guard in the opening titles?
 - a) He was wearing a red uniform
 - b) You've seen one guard, you've seen them all!
 - c) He wasn't wearing any uniform
12. You are posted on board the Space Princess as an undercover security guard. While on surveillance duty in the purser's office, you become bored watching the drugged passengers enjoying themselves. Would you...
 - a) Complete your duty no matter how boring, like a good security guard should?
 - b) Bring along your episodes of B7 to watch on the monitors?
 - c) Start eating the same food as the passengers?
13. It is nearing the end of the second calendar. Space Command celebrates by holding a fancy-dress party, with you on duty at the entrance. Servalan arrives in the guise of Commissioner Sleer. Do you...
 - a) Pretend not to notice?
 - b) Whisper: "Your secret is safe with me, Servalan?"
 - c) Not recognise her anyway?
14. One of the main items of a Federation guard is their para-handgun. What is the main objective of possessing such a weapon...
 - a) To be able to hit a target without fail?
 - b) For the weapon to be a low-energy bolt discharge issue?
 - c) A nice flower protruding from the barrel?
15. A Federation guard must always be a credit to...
 - a) The F.S.A.?
 - b) The rebellion?
 - c) Their parents?
16. You are posted to the planet Zondawl to await the arrival of two dangerous rebels. Would you...
 - a) Plan your trap well in advance of their arrival by burying yourself in the sand?
 - b) Make your presence there as conspicuous as possible, by doing acrobatics over the sand-dunes in the hope of scaring them away?
 - c) Take your deck-chair and bucket and spade in case they don't show up?
17. You are issued with an AAA security pass. What does the triple-A stand for?
 - a) Clearance to all levels of security in Space Command
 - b) The noise Travis made when falling down the well
 - c) A sound often heard from a dentist's room

18. You are left in charge of a female prisoner after an attack on your base, but she manages to overpower you. Do you...
- Resign for being a wimp?
 - Say you really enjoyed it?
 - Say you would never hit a woman?
19. You are on escort duty at the trial of your ex-space commander. There is an attack on the HQ and he tries to escape. Do you...
- Shoot him?
 - Let him escape?
 - Advise him of his rights?
20. Name eight arrestable offenses:
- Blake, Avon, Vila, Jenna, Cally, Gan, Tarrant, Dayna
 - Servalan, Travis, Jarvik, Ven Glynd, Leitz, Arlen, Federation guards, mutoids
 - The Horizon Committee
21. Listed below are three sets of items that could be issued to Federation guards on leaving the Academy. Which would you issue?
- Smart uniform, thermal underwear, para-handguns, side-arms, ultramodern state-of-the-art communicators
 - Tatty uniform, faulty communicators, para-handguns (low energy bolt), a list of false names and locations of rebels.
 - Passing-out parade scrolls, cheque book and pen.
22. You are fighting the Helots on the planet Helotrix, when during a lull in the fighting, your section leader orders you to dismantle your weapons and re-build them again. Do you...
- Use your gun on the officer in question, because he may be a traitor?
 - Dismantle it?
 - Smoke a pipe of peace instead?
23. Place the following in the correct order as they appeared in the opening titles, then return to Question 2: Eye, Federation Guard, Liberator, Blake screaming, Dome, B7 logo, ELIMINATE, Surveillance Camera. How did you do?
- Four or more in correct order
 - All eight in correct order
 - I can't remember

HOW YOU SCORED

Artwork by Rory Hull

Count how many A's, B's and C's you have.

Mostly A's: You are the sort of person we are looking for. Join the F.S.A. today!

Mostly B's: You show rebellious tendencies. Your application will be filed under 'Rebel Activist'. A squad of troopers are likely to see you in person.

Mostly C's: You've joined the wrong appreciation society! Fear not, the Federation could still use you - as a mascot for their pursuit ships!

If you actually scored ALL A's - "What are you doing reading this rebel publication, trooper? I'm putting you on report!"

Finally, I wonder how many of you noticed that the questions continue in a loop? Technically speaking, you should still be going through the questions! Therefore, you have just FAILED the F.S.A. test!



HORIZON PUBLICITY REPORT

by Fliss Davies

Well, I did say last time that Blake's 7 tended to crop up in the most unlikely places - the prize for the unlikeliest of all has to go to *Camping and Caravanning Monthly*! Granted, it was only an advertisement for the Liberator Model Kit, but what an unusual place to find one! Spare a thought for me, wandering through W.H. Smiths on a Saturday with a fervent completist like Kevin. He has a tendency to pick up the latest issue of *Model Mart* and say, "Oh dear, I'll have to buy this - the Liberator ad. is slightly different from the last issue..." Other unlikely mentions of B7 cropped up on Red Rose Radio (Lancashire's independent station) in their quiz, and also on Dave Lee Travis's show on Radio 1, in the middle of his quiz, when he mentioned the series because one of his contestants was called Blake! I did write in to DLT, pointing out the B7 connection in his own name, but didn't manage to get a mention, I'm afraid. Still, I keep persevering. Of more interest, Jacqueline Pearce was interviewed on Gloria Hunniford's programme on Radio 2, and talked about B7. (*...Jac. - And apparently, among other things, she also related her encounter with 'Dixon'... Gambit attendees will know what I mean!!*) Also, Paul Darrow was interviewed on Granada T.V.'S *This Morning* programme, where he talked about B7 and about *Making News*.

Getting back to more traditional publications to find mentions of B7, the specialist magazines have been doing us proud lately. Starlog published an interview with Terry Nation, and TV Zone came up with a really good article on the series, featuring a beautiful double page colour picture of Scorpio in its silo. I wrote to TV Zone, and they wrote back telling me that they do plan more articles on Blake's 7. I understand from John H. Elsen that one of these should be his interview with Peter Tuddenham. J.H.E. is also still writing for DWB, whose April issue includes his article about Blake's 7 merchandise, with information and photos supplied by us! The May issue (No. 77) contains a review of the BBC B7 videos (with another photo supplied by us!) and the June issue (No. 78) will have reviews of Space City 1990 and the long-awaited article on B7 fandom - hopefully to coincide with Horizon's 10th birthday. So keep your fingers crossed! DWB seems to be doing a lot on B7 now, and also branching out into other TV media as well as retaining a strong DW slant, so it's well worth buying. Especially well worth looking out for at the moment is Idols magazine, which has just launched its own Association of Fan Clubs. Horizon has been invited to join this association and we therefore hope to see some Blake's 7 features cropping up in Idols as a result of our involvement.

Despite repeated rumours that the BBC are planning to repeat B7, it seems almost certain that this will not take place, at least for the foreseeable future. However, there is a pretty good chance that the new BSB Satellite company will show it. This is good news for anyone who can afford a satellite dish, so if any of you were sitting about out there dithering about whether to buy SKY or BSB, your choice should now be a little easier! More info when we can confirm this...

One of the nicest things about being Publicity Officer is that I get to liaise with so many other clubs and find out what's going on. Thanks to everyone for keeping in touch. Thanks also to those who've taken the trouble to write and let Kevin and me know about mentions of B7 in the media, particularly Rory Hull, Marc Rhodes-Taylor, Anthony King, Karen Foley and Stuart Smith. Please do keep writing to keep us informed, as it's always nice to hear from everyone, and Kevin gets very frustrated if he misses anything!

All the best

Fliss

BLAKE'S 7 IN THE MEDIA

Compiled by Kevin Davies

(With thanks to Marc Rhodes-Taylor)

TELEVISION: Telly Addicts quiz - Blake in 'character' round (30/10/89)

Telly Addicts quiz - clip for competition (30/10/89)

TV Weekly - Sally Knyvette interview (5/12/89)

Open Air - Sally Knyvette interview

The A-Z of TV - under 'W' for 'WHY??!!' (1/1/90)

Techno - Hairdryer ship from 'Star One' featured (15/1/90)

This Morning - Paul Darrow interview

ITV Teletext - RSVP - Letter from person complaining about the BBC's policy regarding not showing repeats.

RADIO:

Dave Lee Travis Show, Radio 1 - brief mention in passing (20/1/90)

Red Rose Radio - Phone-in quiz to name longest running SF show. One guess was B7.

Gloria Hunniford Show, Radio 2, 16/2/90 - Jacqueline Pearce interview.

Radio 1, 29/3/90 - Competition to win B7 video.

NEWSPAPERS: The Hendon Times - 10th Anniversary Charity Appeal Presentation (31/8/89)

Daily Mirror - Mention in TV entry for Making News (5/2/90)

The Sunday Post (Scotland) (Feb '90) - Paul Darrow interview, about Making News

Daily Mirror - Video Sales figures - 'The Beginning' is number 10 in their top ten! (23/3/90)

Daily Mirror - Video Sales figures - 'The Beginning' has moved up to number 8! (30/3/90)

MAGAZINES: Starlog, November '89 - B7 Episode Guide, part 2.

- Starlog, January '90 - Terry Nation interview
 DWB, November '89 - Liberator Model Kit offer
 DWB January '90 - Gareth Thomas interview
 DWB March '90 - The video releases & discussion of future releases.
 DWB April '90 - Complete Guide to B7 Merchandise (+ B7 colour cover - the first non-Doctor Who cover on this magazine!)
- Radio Times - Telly Addicts competition (4-10/11/89)
 Radio Times - Reprise of Telly Addicts competition (18-24/11/89)
 Radio Times - Query about repeats of B7 (25/11-1/12/89).
 Radio Times - Telly Addicts competition answers (6-12/1/90)
 Radio Times - Brief mention on letters page (13-19/1/90)
 Radio Times - Mention as a Cult Show in article on 'Quantum Leap' (10-16/2/90)
 Radio Times - report on the videos, plus photograph.
- Model & Accessories Mart, November '89 - 'Modelling for Blake's 7' by Martin Bower
 Model & Accessories Mart - various dates carry ads for Liberator Model Kit.
 Camping & Caravanning Monthly, January - Liberator Kit advertisement!
 Private Eye, October '89 - mentioned in an article on book promotion.
 Cancer Relief News, Winter '89/'90 - B7 Charity Appeal Presentation
 Doctor Who Magazine, March issue - reference to rumour that BSB are buying the series.
 TV Zone #4, March '90 - Feature on B7.
 TV Zone #5, April '90 - Article on 'The Way Back', review of 'Avon: A Terrible Aspect' and B7 video competition.
- Scale Models International, April - Review of Liberator Model Kit
 The Stage & Television Today, 2/2/90 - Article on B7 and Space City, with photo.
 Woman's Own (!) 19/3/90 - Letter in TV Club section about B7, with photo of Dayna, Tarrant and the Kairopan Spider!
- Starburst issue 139 - News on the videos, and in reference to a theme park.
 Idols, April, issue 26 - Feature on B7

FEATURING BLAKE'S 7

I thought people might be interested in which media magazines contain features on B7. Back issues of various publications can often be found at specialist shops or collectors' fairs. The following is a list of Starlogs and Starbursts. If there is a demand, further listings could be researched.

- STARLOG No. 114 - Gareth Thomas Interview 116 - Paul Darrow Interview
 117 - Terry Nation Interview 118 - Michael Keating Interview
 121 - Jacqueline Pearce Interview 126 - Jan Chappell Interview
 128 - Paul Darrow on Avon: A Terrible Aspect
 130 - Sally Knyvette Interview 135 - Steven Pacey Interview
 138 - Brian Croucher Interview 139 - Gareth Thomas Interview
 140 - David Jackson Interview 147 - B7 Episode Guide Part One
 148 - B7 Episode Guide Part Two 150 - Terry Nation on conventions.

STARLOG POSTER MAGAZINE Vol. 8 - Season 3 poster.

STARLOG YEARBOOK Vol. 1 - Paul Darrow Interview

STARLOG TV EPISODE GUIDES Vol. 2 - Seasons 1-3 Guide.

- STARBURST No. 3 - Book review and comparison with Logan's Run
 6 - Terry Nation Interview
 18 - Cast interviews and production report
 20 - Special effects
 38 - Glynis Barber interview
 43 - The End of Blake's 7
 64 - Feature in TV ZONE
 89 - Amusing anecdotes
 114 - Horizon
 115 - 10 Year Celebration (NOTE: This issue is incorrectly numbered 114 on the cover)

THE BBC BLAKE'S SEVEN VIDEOS

Early in 1987 two exciting things occurred in the world of B7 fandom! Horizon acquired it's first word processor (Diane's) and... the BBC released the last of their 3 (hideously expensive at £24.95 each) B7 videos (**Orac**). Whilst you decide which of these 2 events was the most exciting, I'll tell you what's been happening on the video scene since then. **NOTHING**. Right up until March 1990, the BBC have done nothing at all except to release a 4th video (entitled **Aftermath**) in Australia. However, they have finally seen sense and you will all be delighted to know that on 5th March 1990 the original 3 videos plus the never-before-seen-in-the-UK 4th video were re-released on the unsuspecting British public at the far more sensible price of £9.99 each.

For those of you who weren't around at the time, we'll give you a brief bit of background information. **The Beginning** (15 minutes of 'The Way Back', a fair amount of 'Spacefall' and 'Cygnus Alpha' and a fairly decimated version of 'Time Squad' all on one 2 hour tape!) was released in summer 1985. The other tapes were also edited, but not so heavily. So then came **Duel** (encompassing 'Seek-Locate-Destroy', 'Duel' and 'Project Avalon'). After that came **Orac** ('Deliverance', 'Orac' and 'Redemption'). This latter was generally accepted to be the best of the three, with better editing, helped by the fact that the three stories run into one another. The last tape, **Aftermath**, brings you 'Aftermath' (conveniently omitting the rest of Series 2... what happened to Gan, Travis, Jenna, Blake himself... and what is it the Aftermath of??) followed by 'Powerplay' and 'Sarcophagus'.

The tapes are released on the BBC Video label, catalogue numbers BBC V 4325, 4327, 4328 and 4329. Price £9.99 each. Most major video stores will be selling them, or if you really have trouble you could get them direct from the BBC, but I'm sure you'll be able to buy them locally. Apparently, the tapes have been doing REALLY well in the 'video top 20 charts' with **Aftermath** coming fourth (I think - can't find my notes!), and the other three also in the top 20. **Aftermath** also reached No. 1 on the Virgin sell-thru chart.

For further information on the videos, you could read the May issue of DWB. Also see reviews in Horizon back NL No. 18 (there were some in 17 and 16, I think, but as they are now out of print that isn't much help, is it?) Anyway, go out and buy them, and let's encourage the BBC and show them how much we appreciate the chance to see the episodes again, even if they are edited versions.

B7 LOCATION GUIDE

by Kevin Davies

Fired with inspiration by such ventures as Blake-ation and the North-West Local Group tour, I have delved into past publications (both fan and professional) to produce the following list of Blake's Seven locations. Where the list is incomplete I apologise, and would welcome updates. I would also like to point out that many of these places may well now be unrecognisable and some will be private property. We would like to hear from any of you who visit any locations.

Finally, I would like to thank Roberta Roe and Rory Hull for their help in compiling this list.

Series One:

THE WAY BACK	Eastlays Quarry, Corsham, Wilts. Plus area around Ivor, Bucks.
SPACEFALL	TV Film Studios, Ealing.
CYGNUS ALPHA	Springwell Lock Quarry, Rickmansworth, Bucks. TV Film Studios, Ealing.
TIME SQUAD	Betchworth Quarry, Reigate, Surrey. Oldbury on Severn Nuclear Power Station.
THE WEB	Black Park, Fulmer, Bucks.
SEEK-LOCATE-DESTROY	Fulham Gas Works. TV Film Studios, Ealing.
MISSION TO DESTINY	TV Film Studios, Ealing.
DUEL	Suters Cottage, New Forest, Hants.
PROJECT AVALON	Milton Quarry, Wells, Somerset. Wookey Hole.
BREAKDOWN	TV Film Studios, Ealing
BOUNTY	Waterloo Tower, Quex Park, Birchington, Kent.
DELIVERANCE	Betchworth Quarry, Reigate, Surrey.
ORAC	Springwell Lock Quarry, Rickmansworth, Bucks.

SERIES TWO:

REDEMPTION	Oldbury on Severn Nuclear Power Station.
SHADOW	Vinnegar Heath Sandpits, Wareham, Dorset.
WEAPON	Rutherford Laboratories, Didcot, Oxfordshire.
HORIZON	Clearwell Scowes, Gloucestershire.
PRESSURE POINT	Church Farm, Abingdon. Hardwick House, Pangbourne. Abbey House, Abingdon. RAF Abingdon. Under Croft, Abingdon.

TRIAL	Royal Alexandra and Albert School, Mersham, Surrey.
KILLER	Oldbury on Severn Nuclear Power Station.
HOSTAGE	Betchworth Quarry, Reigate, Surrey.
COUNTDOWN	TV Film Studios, Ealing.
VOICE FROM THE PAST	Wembley Conference Centre.
GAMBIT	Royal Festival Hall underpass.
THE KEEPER	Bream Scowels, Gloucestershire.
STAR ONE	Old Lightmoor Colliery, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.

SERIES THREE:

AFTERMATH	Bamburgh, near Holy Island.
POWERPLAY	Wookey Hole(?) Rippon, Yorkshire(?)
VOLCANO	Hebden Moor, Yorkshire.
CHILDREN OF AURON	Leeds Polytechnic Civil Engineering Dept, Dam in Yorkshire.
DEATH-WATCH	Wembley Exhibition Halls (now demolished). Southall Gas Works(?)
TERMINAL	Perton Hill, Oxfordshire

SERIES FOUR:

RESCUE	Perton Hill, Oxfordshire
STARDRIVE	Dunstable
HEADHUNTER	Box Hill, Surrey
ASSASSIN	Somewhere in Dorset!
GAMES	Winspit, Dorset
GOLD	Poole Refuse Disposal Centre
WARLORD	The Friary Shopping Centre, Guildford, plus Betchworth Quarry(?).
BLAKE	A forest in Camberley, Berkshire.

Apparently, Armscliff Crag, wherever that might be, was used in a third season episode, but I don't know which one!

TEC-SEC**COMMENTS ON KERR AJAY'S IMIPAC THEORY****KIN MING LOOI**

I found Kerr Ajay's Tec-Sec theory about IMIPAC interesting, but I thought that unstable molecules and atoms decay, meaning that either the victim would die or the mark on the victim would wear off, depending on whether or not the decay started off a chain reaction. Still, I suppose one could rationalise that the unstable atoms had a very long half-life so the victim will be dead of old age long before any significant decay takes place. Mind you, considering all the scientific lapses in the series, why am I nit-picking about such a trivial matter?

WILLIAM COOK

How do we know the weapon fired a beam of neutrons? My memory of this episode is very poor. The most debatable part of Ajay's theory on how it works, as far as I can see, is the 'signature'. His idea that in the area marked by the gun there is an area of normal, stable molecules; why that? I mean, the whole de-stabilised spot would be surrounded by stable ones. Could not the surrounding molecules act as the signature? Or, could not the person's chemical make-up in some way together with their individual characteristics form the signature? It is said that although there are certain skin, hair, etc. types, each person is unique. No one has exactly the same skin type or hair type as anyone else. So could not a victim be their own signature?

KEVIN DAVIES B.Sc (Hons)

IMIPAK (not IMIPAC, since it is an acronym and the last word is KEY), is an excellent weapon; not so much because it kills, but because of the fear it instills in the victim due to the delay involved. Marked people need to be very careful where they go.

I am not at all convinced that a beam of neutrons would produce the effect. Neutrons will not make atoms unstable. They break up some (Uranium, for example), but not organic molecules (as in people). Even atoms that are affected break up immediately and not at some future time. No, neutrons would mainly pass through atoms. A few would collide and bounce off, but none would stick to an atom and make it unstable. Even supposing that marked atoms **do** break up - so what? The Projector part of the weapon may "zap" a million atoms, but we'd hardly notice as we are made up of **far** more. The breaking up of certain atoms will only spread to others in the sort of matter used in nuclear fuel, not in living tissue. I am not at all sure that I have an adequate theory, but I favour the idea of some way in which the Projector could annihilate the affected atoms (ie. convert all their mass into the energy equivalent) upon being keyed. This energy would be liberated as heat and gamma rays. Basically, the victim would burn up from within. This does tie in to what we see of the creature Coser kills; before it dies, smoke or steam rises from its claw.

As for how the victim is labelled for future dispatch, I can't accept the idea of a coded set of molecules in the victim's body. Over a period of time our molecules are likely to be replaced, thus erasing the code. Perhaps the unstable molecules could be triggered by a signal given out by the Key when it detects the genetic structure of the target (unique to each individual) - which would mean that Blake's clone could be in trouble! This does not explain HOW the device looks at the DNA, nor does it overcome the problem that if molecules come and go, how come the unstable potential is 'there forever'? Any offers?

MARC RHODES-TAYLOR

At a recent Horizon meeting at the home of Cathy and Paul Holroyd, someone suggested that Servalan might have used a variation of IMIPAK to zap two of her assistants in 'Children of Auron'. Is this possible? Also, could someone please explain how single isomorphic response works, as I would like to know how Vargas (Cygnus Alpha) was able to pick up Blake's gun and use it without getting his hand burned or even hot, and how members of the Seven were able to lose guns then later pick new ones (why didn't the protection mechanism come into play?) (Ed. Obviously, Avon reprogrammed it!)

As you see, Kerr Ajay's IMIPAC theory generated quite a bit of interest among our technically-minded members! Unfortunately, Ajay is very tied up with college projects and unable to write another theory for the newsletter at the moment. We therefore welcome any further theories on the subject of IMIPAC (or IMIPAK!) - or indeed any other scientific subject. To get the ball rolling, here's an article on the nature of Tarial (or Tarriel!) Cells:

WHAT IS A TARIAL CELL, REALLY?

by Kathryn Andersen

(revised version of an article which appeared in Cypher No.1 - NL of new Australian Club Liberator Australis)

This question has fascinated me almost ever since I first heard of them, but we really know very little about them. The Tarial Cell was invented by Ensor when he was eighteen, and it revolutionised the industry so that all computers in the Federation had Tarial Cells. It is also the means by which Orac is able to tap into other computers without disturbing their security. And that is all we know about them.

So, what could they really be? What part of a computer did they revolutionarily replace? The internal memory? The processor(s)? The communications interface? Some part of the software, like the Operating System, even? Or something else we can't even imagine? (Well, that's not much help, if we can't even imagine it...) Let's look at the possibilities:

Memory

This is the first thing one thinks of, considering the similarity of the name 'Tarial Cell' to the phrase 'memory cell'. After all, so many leaps and bounds have been made in that area already, in the short history of computing, that imagining it happening again is not difficult. Smaller, faster, more durable memory, something of the same kind of quantum leaps as vacuum tubes -> transistors -> silicon chips were not difficult to imagine at all. Whether it is likely or not isn't really the issue - how likely is teleportation?

But I can't see how it could be used to tap into other computers meaningfully. Okay, so you might be able to access all the myriad ones and zeros in the internal memory, but how would you know what it meant? Is this 0100011100101100111101111000001 an instruction or a piece of data? And what sort of data? A number? (The above number equals 10713176701 to base 8 and equals 1194130881 to base 10) The encoding of a character? (And in what character set/language?) A pointer to another memory location? And is it really 0100011100101100111101111000001? Maybe it is 10111000110100110000010000111110 instead! (Swap the zeros and ones). A bit of memory by itself is useless unless one knows what one is supposed to do with it. However, it could be that Orac is so magnificently clever he can deduce what it all means, or at least, he was clever enough to be able to insert a computer virus which did all the work for him... After all, if Orac could discern which bit of memory in a processor held the current instruction, he could alter it... and of such chinks are security breaches made...

Processing - Operating System

If a Tarial Cell is a new kind of processor, which is so wonderful that all computers are just dinosaurs without one, then this would make Orac's job much easier. The processor is what actually does all the work - and if you can affect that, then nobody can stop you. You can tell the computer to send you data, you can affect transactions, you can insert data of your own - build your own computer virus...

Someone suggested to me that a Tarial Cell might actually be some sort of hardware operating system, like you can get nowadays graphics processing on a bit of hardware, this might be some marvellous, fast, convenient higher-level hardware processing device. This would be quite revolutionary not just because it in itself was marvellously useful (however that was managed) but because it would have caused the standardization of all Federation computers. They would all be able to talk to each other, using this system. Even though people are working on it, this does not yet happen today. There are too many schools of thought to yet agree on one standard for everything. Of course, the Federation being a dictatorship, they may have imposed standards, but they have no control over non-Federation computers...

Communication

Another suggestion is that a Tarial Cell is some sort of communications device used as part of the input/output interface of the computer - something as revolutionary as the ansible(*), though probably not quite. Orac probably has some method for tapping into Tarial Cell communications which are not directed to it. The odd thing about Fed. communication is sometimes it appears to be limited by distance (eg. in 'Horizon' the Federation patrol sends a message about being out of range and thus unable to pass on the alert about the Liberator) and sometimes it doesn't (there is no way that Star One could control such time-critical applications such as navigation from way out on the edge of the galaxy unless distance was irrelevant). One way of resolving this problem would be to say that computer communications, though probably not electromagnetic (that would still be too slow), are NOT instantaneous. This 'other' communication method is probably that for which the massive boosting stations such as those on Saurian Major were used.

The puzzle about this, though, is why Tarial Cells are then mentioned/used only in connection with computers, rather than communications in general. An instantaneous method of communication sounds like something they would want to use all the time, rather than just for computers. Is this a technical difficulty or a psychological one? It may be that the Federation bureaucracy is so compartmentalized in its thinking that it cannot conceive computers being used for communications - but that they would hold that error for more than 20 years is hard to believe. It is also hard to believe that it is a portability problem, since one would assume that Orac has Tarial Cells and is quite portable - portable enough for one person to carry, anyway. It is a puzzle. Of course, taking Orac as an example of a computer with Tarial Cells could be misleading - since Orac is so unique, it may be unique in regard to the portability of its Tarial Cells also. Then again, it may not. Another point: Orac's communication beams are described (in 'Shadow') as passing through the fifth dimension. This appears to support the idea that Tarial Cells are to do with communication, but on the other hand, why then was Orac the only computer vulnerable to invasion by this being from another dimension? The answer to that is, I guess, that it wasn't Orac's Tarial Cells per se that rendered it vulnerable, but what it was able to do with/to them, which made Orac unique.

(*) FOOTNOTE: The 'ansible' is a communications device which passes its messages instantaneously. Thus lightspeed is no barrier to it. I first came across the word 'ansible' in the works of Ursula Le Guin, but I don't know if she coined it herself.

NOTE: One thing about any of these methods for tapping into other computers is that they would have to be very subtle, or someone else other than Ensor is likely to have been able to build his own version of Orac, if not first, then at the same time, or later. Certainly, one cannot assume Servalan would not have been trying to produce her own Orac, if not after she failed to steal the original, then certainly when she was President. The only reason I can think of for her not trying to get her scientists to make one would be that she couldn't trust any of them to have access to something so powerful. But that doesn't really make sense, considering how many powerful weapons the Federation produced, I'm sure they must have had security enough for the most paranoid.

AND NOW A FINAL QUESTION: How come Zen, a computer made by an alien race, had a human invention - the Tarial Cell? Zen must have had them, or Orac would not have been able to control Zen, as it did in 'Orac' and 'Redemption'.

A LIBERATOR DIARY

by Kevin Davies

When making the new kit of LIBERATOR from Comet, I kept a diary of its construction for the benefit of anyone who may be interested. By a 'day', I mean a few hours spent on it when I had the chance.

DAY 0: It is a very impressive box! The outside looks great, the insides look alarmingly complex. I was disappointed that the drive unit is not translucent/green. That is going to cause trouble.

DAY 1: Well, you have got to start somewhere. I started with the three neutron blasters. After cutting the parts off the sprue with a sharp knife, I glued them together using super glue (Humbrol Wonder bond). This is because I'm impatient - it sets in ten seconds, which means that you don't have much time to correct any errors! Part 7 (the piece at the tip of the neutron blaster cone) didn't fit into the hole intended for it, so I widened the hole with the point of my knife. The panels that go round this structure need to be spaced slightly apart, or you get left with a huge gap at the end. I know this, because I got a big gap at first and had to start again! Fill any gaps with a filler such as 'Milliputt', and sand smooth with a fine grade of sandpaper. I felt better for having begun.

DAY 2: I stuck all the little details on the blasters (and the 'intakes', since they were on the same sprue). I speared each one with the point of my knife before transferring them to the model. The positioning is tricky here, as there is no guide. That's all for today!

DAY 3: The brass bits! These gave me loads of hassle. The very tiny pieces that go between the base of the support pylon and the curved part of the main body are best dealt with when still on the frame. What I did was break the larger of these pieces off and superglue it on to the smaller bit that was still attached to the frame. When the glue was dry, I broke off the whole thing, and then glued it on to the next bit that was still on the frame, and so on. These small pieces are so small, they're actually dwarfed by a pair of tweezers - I lost two of the tiny triangles when cutting them off and

had to cut replacements out of the brass frame! When putting the little 'fins' around part 7, I found doing them in pairs with one opposite the other helped to keep them evenly spaced. I then tried to attach the probes. After the third one in a row had folded up in my hands, I began to realise they were not going to work, and I gave up.

DAY 4: Glued together the halves of the forward hull and intake, along with the surface detail. There is a gap left in the nose. I drilled a tiny hole in the nose to take the probe later.

DAY 5: I cut a semi-circle out of the back end of each half of the main body, and inserted a bulb-holder in it. I soldered two wires onto the holder and led them out through the hole for the stand support. I then stuck the two halves together and fitted a 2.5 volt torch bulb into the holder.

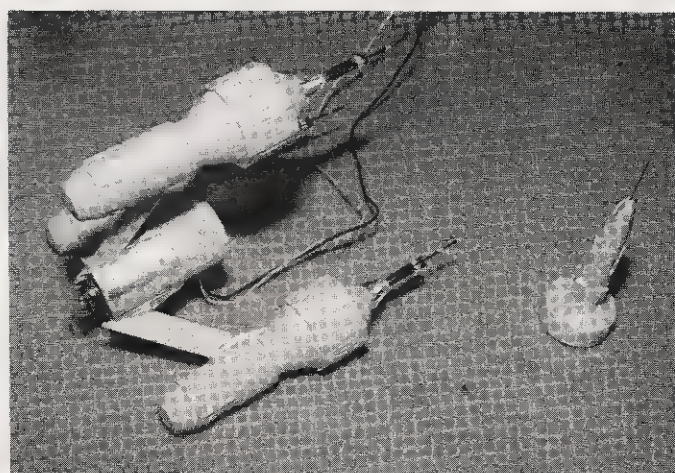
Nothing for it but to make my own probes. I used pins, cutting the heads and points off them with a pair of pliers. I deepened the locating holes with a tiny drill and glued the pins in place. I did the same for the nose, but left the point on the pin.

DAY 6: I made the little detail on the probes by stripping off some insulation off a wire and then cutting this plastic sleeve into small sections which could then be fitted over the pins.

Base and Rear Globe



Wiring and The Probes!



DAY 7: Made central probes in same way as others, but using longer pins (I used optical pins).

DAY 8: Filled the gap in the nosecone and added the four fins (these were tricky). I then attached the three blasters, only to discover that they all pointed inwards! I had to break them off again and file the tops of the support pylons until the blasters were mounted at the right angles. This had to be judged by eye. I then filled gaps in the pylons and between the pieces of the main hull. Whilst attaching the nose section to the main hull, I noticed that the instructions show it differently to the various photos I have seen.

DAY 9: Made stand support out of hollow plastic tube (from a model shop) so that I could lead the wires down through it. I then fitted that to the hull.

DAY 10: The bit I hate! I am never confident painting models. I mixed up a tiny bit of matt grey enamel paint with matt white, to produce a slightly off-white. This I put into my airbrush and sprayed the model, giving it several coats (the brass bits needed a lot to match the plastic parts). I used a brush to touch up any imperfections. The biggest problem I had here was that I held the model by the stand support while painting it, and only then did it occur to me to wonder where the hell I was going to put it? Eventually, I jammed its support in a drawer to hold it!

DAY 11: I mixed a pale grey (lots of white to a small amount of grey). Using a brush, I painted some panels on the hull. These can be based on photos, but improvisation is okay. I was wary of cramming too much detail on to a fairly small model.

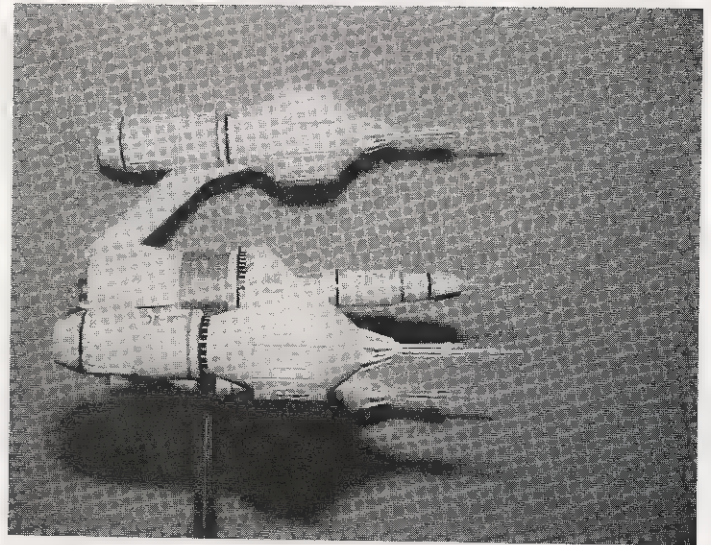
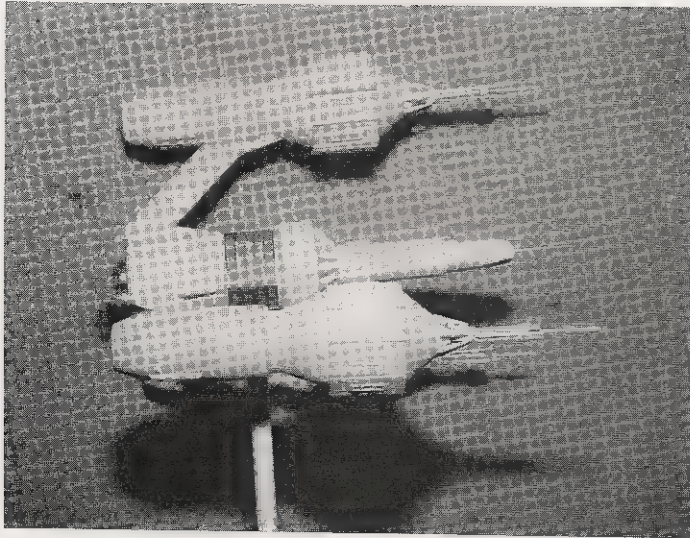
DAY 12: I mixed some of that pale grey with white to make yes, an even paler grey! This I used to paint a few more panels, though not as many as before. Before putting on the brass solar panels, I had to treat them with brass polish since they were all tarnished and this was to be a pre-Terminal Liberator! There was no problem sticking them on. I applied a coat of matt varnish (again from a model shop) to stop air getting to them and tarnishing them again.

DAY 13: The decals. I put some of them on the ship, following photos again. The instructions are not much help here. I didn't use all of the decals, because it would look too 'crowded'. A pair of tweezers and a knife were useful in positioning some decals. Whilst at it, I painted the windows in the nose section matt black.

DAY 14: Matt scarlet enamel paint for the blocks on the nose (no, I'm not sure what they are either). There is some small amount of white on alternate ones of these blocks too. I painted the stand support matt black.

Before Painting

After Painting



DAY 15: I felt the decals looked a little too bright and clean, so I gave them a coat of matt varnish which also protects them.

DAY 16: Drilled out the support at the base of the pole so that the wires could fit through, then fitted it. I modified the model base by cutting a hole to accommodate a slider on-off switch, and drilling a central hole for the support rather than have the model off-centre as the base is designed.

DAY 17: Bought a can of matt black model spray paint and sprayed the base twice.

DAY 18: Drastic measures time. I used a model saw to slice off the top of each dome on the rear globe. With a knife, I cut the plastic away to the moulded line and finished this butchery by sanding the edge. The green hemispheres were made for me by a friend who had access to a vacuum-forming machine. This device was used to mould thin green plastic into domes using a squash ball as a mould. I poked these domes into the remains of the rear parts and traced out the shape of the opening onto them. I cut the green bits out and glued them onto the white part. The next stage was to put a tiny bit of 'Blu-Tac' onto the inside of the dome in the places where any light was showing through. That was more than enough for one day!

DAY 19: The insides of the domes needed to be painted matt black to stop light getting out through the thin plastic (the same thing was done inside the main body around the bulb). The two halves of the domes were glued together and I found that it was necessary to sand this unit down at its narrow end to fit the main body. I gave the rear unit a coat of off-white paint, this time just using a brush. I also did the light grey and even lighter grey panelling, again copying details from photos. I then fitted it to the main craft. There was no need to use glue, as it was a tight enough fit to hold it (and I wanted to be able to replace the bulb should the need arise). I couldn't get the white stripe decals to stick to my plastic dome, besides which, I didn't think they looked right - there seemed to be too many of them. So I hand painted them in matt white. Any errors I later scraped off with a knife.

DAY 20: Rather than use the black decals for the rear (which I couldn't get to work) I painted the details in matt black. I gave the model a quick looking-over and used a small brush to touch up one or two little details that needed it.

DAY 21: I asked a friend to build me a little circuit that would flash a bulb at the sort of frequency seen in Liberator's power unit. (This friend is a physics teacher in Wigan, and built the circuit at his school. One of his pupils chanced by as he was building it, and asked him what he was doing. "You wouldn't believe me if I told you," my friend said.

"Oh go on, tell me Sir!" begged the kid.

"I'm building a power unit for a Liberator Space Craft," said my friend.

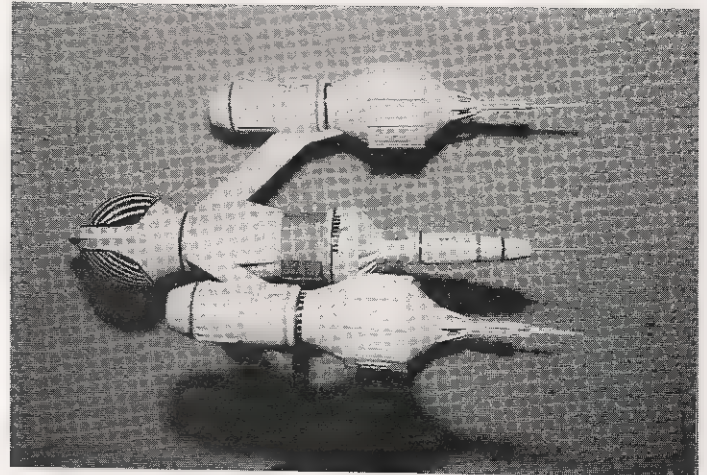
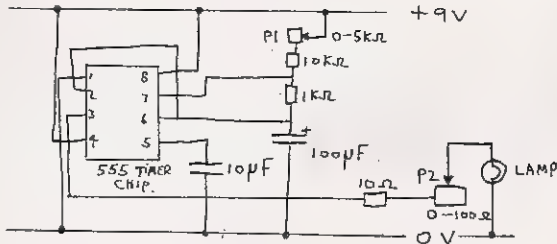
"I don't believe you, Sir."

"I knew you wouldn't!"

I soldered this to the wires under the stand and fitted a 9V battery. I used bits of scrap plastic to hold these things in place under the stand. A quick test, and to my amazement - it worked! The light actually flashes on and off! (It should really pulse bright and less-bright, but that is very difficult to achieve electronically).

The Circuit for making the Bulb Flash
P1 controls flashing rate
P2 controls brightness

The Finished Product!



Hard as it was to believe, that was it - the model was done!

The model is a lot of work to build. Some bits were beyond me, so I ended up making some bits from scratch. However, it does make a superb display item that is extremely accurate in detail and really conveys the feel of the craft. This kit is probably the classiest piece of merchandising ever produced for the series. If you haven't done much model building before, don't be put off by the complexity of this kit - just be prepared to take it very slowly. After all, where else are you going to get a model Liberator from?

(...Jac - STOP PRESS - Although it took Kevin twenty-one days to construct his model, he has since built another one (albeit non-flashing) in 6 hours flat! Can anybody beat that?)

COMET MINIATURES - 'LIBERATOR' Review and Model Making Guide by Paul Holroyd

The Liberator is Comet Miniatures 6th model, and their first to use injection moulding for all the major parts. However, like their previous models, it is a multimedia kit, as most small parts are brass - & there are a lot of small parts! Some of them are less than a millimetre square. For an experienced modeller, this is a challenging project which can result in a beautiful model, without most of the effort involved in scratch building. I built the model in subsections, starting with the dome.

Cost unfortunately prevented the moulding of the relevant parts in transparent green plastic. To build the model totally accurate you need two 'Plastruc' clear hemispheres 1" in diameter. Cut out of plastic sheet 0.020" thick a piece the outside of which follows the shape of the kit dome, and the inside being a circle the diameter of the inside of the hemispheres (fig. 1). Cut the kit dome parts just in front of the 'green' area, painting the inside matt black and remove the same amount from the hemispheres, painting the inside with 'Tamiya' Acrylic Transparent Green paint. Glue the parts together (fig. 2) and fill with a two part filler (eg Milliput) to match original mouldings.

Luckily, white plastic is translucent, so the dome can be illuminated without building a new one. This is how I proceeded: I ran a pencil round the edges of the area to be lit, then painted the inside of the rest of the moulding with two thick coats of matt black paint to render it opaque. When these had dried thoroughly, the black areas were covered with silver sellotape (to aid reflection) and the dome halves glued together.

The Fuselage Front: Vanes on the front are supplied as surface fitting brass pieces with no location guides. Even if you manage to superglue them in the right place, the joint will be brittle and easily broken. The way I made mine is easier to

get right and the result less liable to damage. I cut away the rear of the two front fuselage mouldings (to allow access to the inside when glued together). I then glued the two halves together and left them to set thoroughly. The front section was then filled with a two part filler. When this had set, I used a razor saw (not a hacksaw) to cut along the joint line from the front to just before the front marked ring. I then marked a line at exactly 90 degrees to the first cut and sawed along the line to just before the mark as before (fig. 3). Next I cut four pieces of 0.015" plastic sheet as per (fig. 4). I glued each piece into the slots so there remained visible a vane the same shape as the original brass parts. A small gap was left in the centre to enable the fitting of the central probe.

Outriggers: The outrigger supports were glued to the appropriate outrigger halves after making a guide (fig. 5) out of spare plastic sheet. When these were set I test-fitted the fuselage sections to each outrigger support. I noticed the outriggers ended up not quite parallel to the fuselage. To correct this I removed about 1/32" from the back of the outrigger support reducing to nothing at the front. Before fixing the fuselage sections to the outriggers they need detailing. First I fixed the main triangle to the fuselage, then I glued the three tiny triangles in place in the slots in the main triangle. When removing small pieces from the sprue, try sticking sellotape across the back of the pieces and the sprue before cutting them out with a sharp knife. This way they don't fly across the room! Next I assembled the rest of the outriggers bar the panels, front cone and detailing. I filled and sanded the joints (I recommend 'Squadron' green putty for filling small cracks and plastic based 'Flexigrit' sanding sheets). When all the joints were smooth, I added the panels and details. I added the T-shaped pieces first and then the small rectangles (see fig. 6) for recommended order). I made each rectangle from 0.010" x 0.060" plastic strip as the kit parts are far too thick. They were applied to the model on the tip of a sharp pointed knife using minimum liquid cement to stop the pieces melting. The ten rectangles behind the panels fit centrally to the panels about 1/8" behind them (fig. 7).

Next I glued the fuselage sections to the outriggers, again using the guide to check they were vertical. Once hard, the joint can be reinforced as per the kit instructions, though a properly welded joint using liquid cement should be almost as strong as the plastic itself. Taking the three front cones I glued the two neutron blaster parts to them (the top slot and hole should line up and you may find it necessary to open out the hole in the cones a bit). When they were set, I drilled out the holes for the probes using a 0.015" drill and a drill stand to ensure the holes were vertical.

I then fitted the vanes to the assembly gluing into the slots first, lining them up, then gluing them to the cone. The same ordering principle was applied as per the detailing on the outriggers. The probes were then added. I made mine out of 0.015" piano wire, as the ones in the kit were ridiculously flimsy and not round sectioned. The kit parts were used as length guides, except that the top and bottom outer probes should be 7/10" of the length of the other outer probes. The collars were made from tiny lengths of fine wire insulation superglued in place. The cones were then glued to the outriggers, the short probes in line with the outrigger supports.

Main Body: If you are lighting the model, you need to acquire the bulb and holder at this point. I got mine from 'Maplin', the electronics firm. I decided to replace the supplied support for the model with something thinner. I used a 3/32" brass tube which doubled as one of the wires for the bulb, the other half being run (insulated) down the centre of the tube. In the series, the mount for the model was originally in the centre of the solar panel area, but it was later moved to just forward of this area. This is where I elected to fit the support, as it allowed me to glue the tube to the back of the large forward moulding. The two rear fuselage halves were then glued together and glued to the large forward moulding after feeding the wires for the bulb through holes made in the rear fuselage. The bulb holder was wired up and glued to the back of the rear fuselage.

Now, at what angle should the forward fuselage be glued? On the large model it was usually seen lined up with the port outrigger (fig. 8), however this looks really naff and I suspect that the reason for this was that the model was originally designed to be supported from the port side (like the TV U.S.S. Enterprise) which would have put the indents in the fuselage top and bottom. The small models usually used this convention, and that is why it was drawn this way in the Technical Manual. The plain probe (another length of 0.015" piano wire) was fixed in the centre of the vanes and the detailing fixed as per the kit instructions (again replacing the small rectangles with ones cut from 0.010" plastic strip as before). Finally, the fuselage pieces were glued in place with the outriggers attached, the joint disguised using the detailing supplied. The dome was then pushed into place (not glued!).

Painting: To do justice to the model, you really need an air-brush. Normal paint sprays are too thick, also note that car sprays have very poor adhesion on plastics - a problem with masking when adding detail. Mask off the 'green' parts of the dome and the solar panel area.

Start with an overall cover of an off-white/grey and add masked strips of slightly darker and lighter colours - keep it subtle on a model of this size. Masks (as in fig. 9) made from postcards are ideal to put on the final touches, just hold them against the model and lightly spray over them.

If you haven't got an airbrush, use enamel sprays with a number of very light coats - try alternating between white and grey, finishing off with white. Detail the model by high and low lighting the moulded detail with a brush. The green for the dome is best achieved using 'Tamiya' Transparent Green paint.

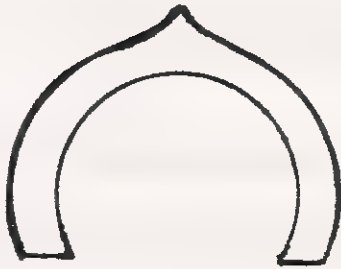


FIG. 1



FIG. 2

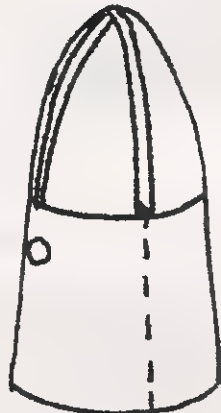


FIG. 3

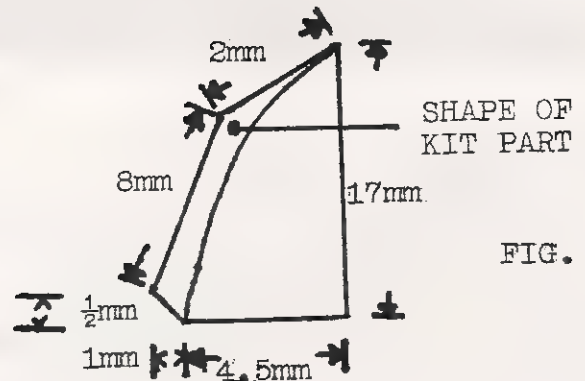


FIG. 4

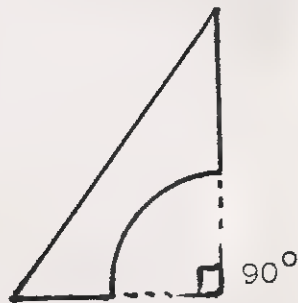


FIG. 5

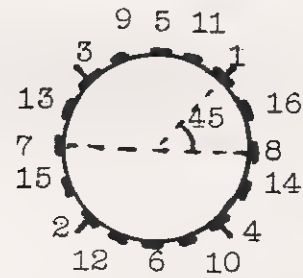


FIG. 6

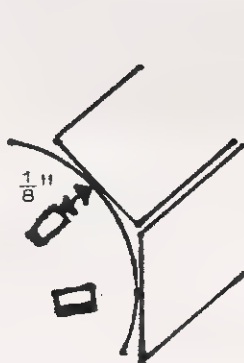


FIG. 7

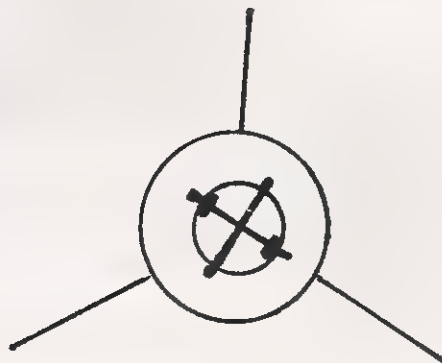


FIG. 8



FIG. 9

(Apologies from Diane here - these Figs were to go in the body of the text next to the relevant paragraphs, but as I suddenly had the typesetting thrust upon me at the last minute and I can't make the text flow round the wretched boxes properly, you'll have to make do with them all on one page. Ho hum!!)

Finally, fix the solar panels (try polishing and varnishing them first). The kit provides ten panels, and Comet claim this was the number on the large model they used to build this model, however all the photos of the large model clearly show it to have twelve. The difference isn't very noticeable, but perfectionists will have to make their own (try squares of gold sellotape on thin white plastic sheet).

Transfers: Using the Technical Manual and photos as a guide, apply the transfers (using decal softeners and wetting agents is recommended). Apply the white stripes on the dome one at a time, starting from the front centre at an angle of about 30 degrees from the straight. A thick coat of matt varnish will protect the transfers.

This is very much a model makers' model in that the kit provides the basis for a very accurate model, but it makes no allowances for ease of assembly, despite its small size. If you're not an experienced modeller, buy a kit and find someone who is, show them this article and persuade them to make it for you!

.....In our next N/L - we will be printing an article by Mat Irvine himself - 'A Beginners Guide to Building Liberator'. In the meantime, a new set of plans has been produced by Comet Miniatures, and if you send an SAE to them requesting a new set, they will be sent. Overseas, please send 2 IRCs. Fuller model building details can be found in 'Scale Models International' April 1990 issue, and Mat's 'Fact and Fiction' column for that month. Back issues are available from Argus Specialist Publications, Argus House, Boundary Way, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP2 7ST. Price £1.50 + p&p.

VILA - A PERSONAL VIEW

by Karen Foley

Of all the characters in Blake's Seven, Vila was the one who intrigued me the most. He was never quite what he seemed to be, nor what he claimed to be. All we really knew about him was that he was from the Delta Levels, and was a habitual thief and lock picker.

Personally, I don't think he was from the Delta Levels. Originally, I think, he was an Alpha and something happened that forced him and possibly his family to move down to the lower levels. He was too well-educated to have lived all his life in the Delta Levels. There is also his knowledge of computers. He had to have knowledge of their workings or he wouldn't have been able to pick all those computerised locks. I don't think the Federation would have wasted such an education on a lowly Delta Grade.

I also don't think he was the coward he made himself out to be. Yes, he was concerned about his own safety, but he was always willing to help out on a rescue. Oh, he complained about the danger, but he never point-blank refused to go anywhere. He finally showed he could fight as well as the others on GP. What a terrific right hook!

He was a mystery. We eventually knew more about Avon's past than we ever knew of Vila's. Yet Vila always came across as the more open of the two. It was because of this openness that none of the others ever questioned him about his past the way they did with Avon. We were given tantalising little snippets: we found out that he couldn't be corrected as Blake had been, and we were left to imagine the pain and suffering he must have gone through. This openness was a very clever act. He was much more secretive than Avon. In fact, he was more Avonish than Avon ever was. His drinking was another act. He was never as drunk as he made out.

All these acts; the cowardice, the openness, the alcoholism and the ineptness where machines were concerned. All these cleverly concealed the real Vila. A Vila who was more of a genius than Avon, and was as brave as the rest of them. Something happened in his past that was so terrible that he felt he had to hide it completely. I think he had to take on a whole new personality and lose his original identity.

I don't think even his name was his own.



MICHAEL KEATING

as
VILA

BBCTV



LETTERS OF COMMENT

STUART SMITH - South Shields, Tyneside

I do think people are being a bit over-critical of Blake's 7 fourth series. Certainly it was B7's least interesting, but it's not too bad. I don't think you can point to any one factor which spoils it - its failings were perhaps due to a few smallish mistakes, such as a poor Scorpio set (I suppose anything would seem poor after the Liberator set!), some badly directed action sequences, and what Mark Willis, in his review of 'Blake' in Space Rat issue 6 called 'the heroic snarling Avon'. However, I did think that the writing was competent, especially Robert Holmes' scripts, and so was most of the acting. Unfortunately, the series looks to me to have had a pretty hefty budget cut, which you can't really blame the production team for. In an S.F. series, low budgets can be disastrous. You can have the best S.F. script ever, but if its effects are poor, just too many people write it off as dross. This is a fact which leads B7 in general to be viewed in an unsympathetic light by many members of the public, and not just the fourth series. They expect TV effects to be as good as film effects, which is just not possible (unless we paid treble the license fee, of course!). By the way, William Cook is right - the 4th series titles would make a great computer game!

Re: Tim Nicholls' comments on 'Star One'. The Andromedan war would still have happened, with the consequent loss of life, without Blake's interference. Indeed, it could be argued that if Blake hadn't intervened, the whole of the defence zone could have been deactivated and the Federation wouldn't have had its early warning. This would have made things far worse for humanity. So Blake actually saved countless lives on that occasion! Chaos did reign after Star One's destruction, but it would have happened anyway, Blake or no Blake, and it certainly wasn't Blake who blew up the whole planet!

I've been enjoying the recent DWB articles on B7, particularly the B7 ratings guide. Surprised to see 'Seek-Locate-Destroy' as the episode most people watched and also to see the second series do so badly in relation to the others. However, Gordon McAllister's last sentence annoyed me: "In hindsight, perhaps it's just as well Blake's 7 ended when it did, rather than soldiering on with waning popularity." I wouldn't call 9 million (the audience for 'Blake') 'waning popularity', especially with the episode being shown against 'Coronation Street', of all things! That aside, B7's been getting pretty good treatment from DWB!

KATHRYN CUTMORE - Maldon, Essex

Re: LOC by Adrian Hudson in N/L 23. Quote: "Only Vila seems the same character from those early adventures and where would we be if we were all like him?"

People call Avon the 'Great Survivor', but who else survived just as long, and why? Wasn't Vila's consistent attitude to life all part of his particular defence against it? Whether seen as a part of the first crew or the last, Vila was always different from the others. They all seemed so hard, tough, determined, committed (match the attribute to the character as you will) with little or no time or even capacity for humour, caring or even relaxation. Vila excelled in all of these attributes; they were a natural part of his persona and essential to his personal survival.

We know that Vila could have been graded Alpha, but chose to be graded Delta, engineered it deliberately, for specific reasons. He then went on to pursue a (presumably) successful career as "a thief and a good one" (Avon, in 'Gold'). On this basis, it seems to me that Vila was very much in control of his own existence from an early age, & went on to make sure that things were as he wanted them to be, as much as possible, within each set of conditions imposed upon him. Vila never needed to affect Toughness, Arrogance, Sarcasm or to alienate everyone around him. He never pretended that he went with Blake out of any commitment to the Cause. He never needed to be a great fighter or a crack shot. Instead, he tried as far as possible to avoid situations where such talents might be necessary, or to be with someone who did have them. Vila was totally confident in his own skills and never laid claim to any others - quite the opposite. The others moaned at and about Vila, threatened and betrayed him, and thought they knew him for exactly what he was. Consequently, one could sympathise with him in 'Orbit', when Avon's cold-blooded decision to ditch Vila in order to ensure his own survival caused Vila such fear and pain - then afterwards he was angry and resentful, and made sure Avon knew it.

I found Vila the easiest character to accept - you knew where you were with him, and he was likeable; not a word you could use with many of the characters! His consistent attitude towards any form of possibly dangerous enterprise made it easy for the others to dismiss him as a fool, a coward, a half-wit, an idiot - all quotes. I don't think Vila was at all cowardly, but it suited him to have everyone thinking that he was, so he played up to the image. This ensured that they all treated him in the way he wanted them to. They didn't automatically include him on missions or expect him to do anything heroic. Consequently, Vila avoided an awful lot of trouble and who can blame him?

There is a great deal of fuss and over-emphasising of Vila's drinking habits, but can anyone quote an episode where he was actually seen to be legless at a time when he was needed? (*Ed.. he made a bit of a drink-related faux pas at the end of 'Rumours of Death' as I recall!!*) There's a world of difference between appreciating the value of the odd bottle (or three) of booze and being roaring drunk 75% of the day. Vila made that work for him too - remember the incident in 'Stardrive' where he manoeuvred (fooled?) Tarrant and Avon into repairing the drive under extremely precarious

conditions, which 'drunken' Vila had suggested but in which he certainly wasn't going to participate. The entire crew unquestioningly accepted that Vila was drunk. Obviously, Vila had that situation set up well beforehand, with his flask of water, received no thanks whatever for saving everyone's life and got the better of them all.

So - where would we be if we were all like Vila? We'd be alive until our own 'last episode', in our right minds, and still in possession of a reasonable sense of humour. Even the 'Great Survivor' couldn't be said to qualify on all of these counts. I hope I will.

KAREN FOLEY - Edinburgh, Scotland

Since it is the start of the year as I write this, I thought I would make some New Year resolutions:

1. I will not complain about the so-called lateness of the N/L. I suppose if we want quality we must put up with the wait.
2. I will try to attend one or two happenings. (Got anything planned for this year, Fliss?) (...Fliss:- I hadn't, but there's no reason why we couldn't have a North West Horizon Summer Party in August. Fancy coming?)
3. I shall try to complete my B7 Epic, which has been gathering dust on some shelves for the past three years. (350 pages long, and started in 1980!)
4. I shall not go on the defensive when non-B7 friends kindly tell me to 'grow up!'
5. I will join the swelling ranks and say in a very loud voice 'I TOO AM A TARRANT SUPPORTER'. Though he comes a close second to Blake in my opinion (you can remove the gun from my back now, Fliss!) (...Fliss:- It's okay, Karen, I'm in complete agreement with you there! Let's hear it for Tarrant!)

Well, these are my top five resolutions. Anyone got some ideas of their own?

ROS WILLIAMS - Wells, Somerset

Pleased to see all the info on the Charity Appeal, the Cons, etc. Enjoyed the L-O-N-G interview. Loved the Tec-Sec. How could anyone be taken in by the Star Trek look-alike "new breed" B7 in New Hampshire?! PLEASE Terry Nation, do not offer us a new breed B7!!

Re: LOCS in NL23 -

William Cook: Would I like to live under a Federation rule? The alternative, according to him, seems to be would I like Blake to kill off me and my family for the greater good (whose greater good?)? (Answer: No!!). On the whole, I don't approve of violent revolution, and I'd grieve over all those unnecessary deaths (though it's reasonable to ask how many people would die if such a revolution didn't happen). I'm afraid I'm firmly on Carnell's side here - wherever possible, you achieve your aims by more subtle means, if you can. But I can sympathise with Blake's desperation and I wouldn't condemn him entirely. On a question like this, I don't think there's a fair answer. It depends on the circumstances at the time and the impulses of those who rule or seek to rule.

I think many fans choose Avon as leader because they like the guy best and because he tended to try and defy Blake (often for no good reason that I could see, other than sheer cussedness)! But no-one is ever (I suspect) going to convince me that Avon was the leader. And I have to agree that unless Blake is present in some way in a 5th Series, it won't be Blake's Seven for me either. Avon's Seven won't be the same thing at all, and I'm not terribly interested in a scenario which concentrates solely on Avon's future.

Gena Davies: As a fanwriter, I'm not likely to agree with Gena's views on fanfic. I suspect that Sarah's remarks in the previous N/L relate to her disappointment over the way fandom has gone recently and a wish to opt out of some of the more depressing developments. I think some fan stories are superior to any of the TV episodes... but that's just my personal opinion.

Tim Nicholls: Ah, someone with a political solution. Excellent!

Judith Ellison: I agree that anyone who is not a native of Earth is an alien (hence Cally is an alien), but the question is... how much of the galaxy has been 'seeded' by citizens of Earth in the past? Is Gan (descended from Earth people, but not himself a native of Earth) an alien? Was Soolin (not born on Earth) an alien? Cally is regarded as humanoid, but described as an alien. So I assume her people do not descend from Earth people, hence are genuinely alien except in outward form. I'm not sure if Judith is arguing with me or agreeing with me! So far as I am concerned, anyone/thing whose genes do not originate from Earth is an alien, no matter what he/she/it looks like. OK? The Altas. It's hard to tell if Norm 1 is an alien or Earth-descended, since he looks human enough and speaks Earthspeak; and I agree the Altas may have been human or humanoid in the past - so you can't really tell if they are aliens or not. Since Liberator is described as an alien ship, I guess we can be forgiven for assuming The System and all its components (including Norm 1?) are alien, though if Norm 1 talks of humans, that's now questionable (I'd have to check the exact remark in the episode...)

Ira Lee Gossett: Many Beeb programmes look rinky-dinky, as you put it! To us, characterisation is far more important than special effects, though it'd be nice (naturally) if we could have everything perfect. I doubt if many of us care about the rinky-dinkiness overmuch. So what if Liberator's set nearly fell down during every episode and eventually had to be destroyed because it wouldn't last another series! It's all part of the fun. I'd rather have rinky-dinkiness than nothing at all, and nothing at all is likely what it'd be if the Beeb had to produce wonderful sfx... since we wouldn't pay for the licence fees required to produce them. I guess we're grateful for what we get. As you can see, I am a confirmed Beeb supporter IN SPITE OF THEIR DETERMINATION TO FORGET B7 EVER EXISTED.

I don't think much of Scorpio as a ship. It was a fearful comedown after Liberator and doubtless contributed to the lower popularity of Series 4 amongst fans here.

Was Blake actually in charge? Perhaps Terry Nation's comment that the name could become a figurehead without the character being required to appear (I assume that's what he meant) indicates that Terry does not intend to feature Blake in his PGP? If so, that will be a great shame and those who are not Avon fans will be disappointed, especially if other favourite characters (favourite to some) also disappear. I hope the PGP will not veer to Tony Attwood's idea of using the name Blake for a computer! (But at least Tony got Blake into the plot... A Plus mark for that.) Blake was a figurehead, according to Series 1, though how he became so isn't clearly explained. He was a leader in his own corner, but not (I think) sole leader of the resistance. On Liberator Blake was obviously in charge (otherwise Avon or someone else would have ditched him early on).

Gary Linares: B7 is anti-establishment. Plenty of people won't mind that... but it must have made the Beeb think a bit.

Ian Dickerson and others: You must have been asked often enough now to think of a Chris Boucher interview. Reading the list of Hon. Members, I am amazed to see Chris is not included - I'd never noticed the omission before. (*..Ed: Well, Ros, and everyone else who keeps mentioning this, Chris Boucher is on our list of people to approach in the future.*)

Elaine Easton: I don't think Justin was a drip... but he was very odd. As I understand it, Dayna never loved Justin except after Servalan's unfriendly therapy, but he apparently loved her. As she wasn't a drip, that should be OK?

Page 58: Mel Gibson is not the world's sexiest man. There, I've contradicted you! I'm not sure who he is, but it certainly isn't him as I can't recall what he looks like anyway... (*..Jac.- Well, if you're not sure who he is, that would explain it! Just go and see Gallipoli/The Bounty/Mad Max I - III/The River/Mrs Soffel/Tequila Sunrise/Lethal Weapon I & II - and THEN contradict us!!*)

Re: Servalan, Misunderstood Genius: Spot on, M1795537, Virn. We psychostrategists must stick together! (Preferably to said misunderstood Genius?) Naturally that comment is by another psychostrategist who doesn't need to be nameless. Delighted to see the photosticker of Carnell (yes, I've been sent a sample and it's... very sexy...) I'd like to order 500 million but where would I put them all? One copy of the man himself would be even better.

Delighted to see I'm a bridesmaid A*G*A*I*N... Enjoyed reading the competition results. A POETRY competition. AAAGH, as they used to say in the Marvel Monthly. I don't mind poetry but I can't write it. Possibly a lament on the fact that I never win these competitions would be suitable.

Thanks again for all the hard work and have a nice New Year, if you've the time to notice it whizzing past!

GENA DAVIES - Powys, Wales

It was nice having the latest newsletter to liven up the dreary space between Christmas and New Year, although (usual gripe) it seems a very long time since the last one. However, its length more than makes up for the delay and I was very pleased to see that I have succeeded in getting a letter printed in it - although it was so long since I wrote in that I had to read it through again before I remembered what I had written in about!

Now to business, ie. comments upon the Letters of Comment.

Ros Williams:- I have also noticed the Kerguelen Islands and after further research found they are named after the sailor who discovered them. He was Breton, so presumably the name is Celtic in origin, just like Avon. Incidentally, according to a Michelin map of mine there are two small villages in Brittany called Kerguelen and Keravon. Could one of them be Avon's ancestral home?

William Cook:- I disagree with the statement by you (and Kin Ming Looi in N/L 22) that the Federation lost 80% of its ships fighting off the Andromedans at Star One. I think that the 80% casualties mentioned at the start of "Aftermath" must refer to the losses amongst the Federation ships which took part in the fighting there and that these were probably only part, maybe a very small part, of the total Federation fleet. My reason for thinking that 80% of the total Federation fleet is an exaggeration of Federation losses at Star One is because the Federation was certainly not expecting an attack from Andromeda near Star One and so at the time the attack occurred most of its fleet would have been carrying out routine duties which would have dispersed it throughout the area of space under Federation control. Therefore it is likely that many of its ships were so far from Star One that even if they set off for it at top speed the moment they heard of the attack, they would have not been able to reach it for a long time and so might not have been involved in the fighting at

all, because it was over by the time they arrived. If the Federation losses had been as high as 80% of its total fleet, its communications and supply lines would have been so badly disrupted that it would have been very difficult for it to survive. It certainly would not have been able to start as rapidly as it did on a successful programme of reconquest based on Pylene 50, since although the drug enabled the Federation to dispense with the large armies of occupation it had formerly needed to keep the conquered planets under control, a sizable force of ships was still necessary to bring in the troops who would carry out the early stages of the reconquest. It is likely that if the Federation wished to use Pylene 50 in the actual attack (or even at the beginning of its occupation of the conquered planet) more ships were needed than before since the drug's instability meant that extra ships would have been needed to transport the raw materials and machinery for making the drug to somewhere near where it was required in order for there to be as short a delay as possible between the time of its manufacture and the time of its use.

Clare Driver:- You are worried about Avon fans and can't understand why they consider such 'an objectionable human being likeable', but you are looking for fellow fans of Tarrant and Travis! Is Travis supposed to be likeable? Surely he would be insulted by the idea. Personally I don't dislike Tarrant or find Avon likeable, but I do find Avon is a much more fascinating character than Tarrant, largely because (as you admit) his character is far better developed. The trouble with Tarrant's character is that it is far closer to that of the conventionally brave, good looking hero who is a cliché in action adventure stories. This makes his character somewhat predictable and therefore rather dull. Avon, on the other hand, is a much more unusual character for this type of story. I agree that his actions and words are frequently infuriating - sometimes horrifying - and consequently he is far from likeable. Indeed, watching him is often disturbing, but throughout the series he is always surprising and interesting to watch, as different aspects of his extremely complex personality are revealed and he is changed by his experiences. In fact, I prefer Avon to Tarrant because his character makes me think. Tarrant's doesn't. (Actually, on reading this over, I realised that my criticism of Tarrant's character does not only apply to Tarrant but to all the characters who joined the Seven at or later than the beginning of the third series. I believe that this is probably because the whole of the first series was written by Terry Nation which ensured that the characters got consistent treatment while they were being established in the viewers' minds, while the later characters arrived when scripts from a number of different writers were being used. This meant that while the viewer was getting to know them they were being given different treatment in stories by different scriptwriters and therefore they were unable to develop the same depth of character as the original ones from the first series.)

Adrian Hudson (and Teresa Ward in the competition):- Don't either of you dare to be so hard on Vila! I don't know any other member of the 7 who is so frequently undervalued by both other members of the crew and by the fans. Lazy and stupid? A slanderous piece of Alpha Class snobbery, characteristic of people who merely give orders and leave the hard and dangerous work of carrying them out to others. I am sure that this typical Alpha slander is directed at all Deltas, not just Vila, and I am sure that if Deltas did do as little work as possible it was because it was their only available means of retaliation against the way their arrogant 'superiors' treated them. I also suspect that most Deltas deliberately pretended to be far more stupid than they really were because they found that a reputation for stupidity limited the degree to which they were exploited. They also claimed to be more scared than they were for the same reason. I should like to point out that Vila's own reputation as a coward largely stems from the fact that he says openly that he is scared. But actually in a really dangerous situation he doesn't get into such a blind panic that he does the first thing which comes into his head in order to save his skin, which is how I define a coward. Avon comes much closer to doing that on several occasions - most notoriously in 'Orbit'. Vila, in fact, is often the member of the crew whose actions save the day, or at least help to salvage something from the wreckage left by the others - for example: he manages to get Orac off Liberator under Servalan's nose, and it is largely because of him that the others manage to escape from the trap Dorian set for them on Xenon. Even on Gauda Prime he almost gets himself and the others out of the mess caused by Avon and Blake (sorry, Blake worshippers, but he must share some of the blame for the disaster. Arlen's presence on the base is definitely Blake's fault). Vila only fails through bad luck. Adrian wants to know where we would be if we were all like Vila? If more of the others had been like him, maybe they would all have lasted a lot longer. Perhaps they might even have won!

We've just had another first rate photo of Brian Croucher on the newsletter back cover, and you printed an interview with him some time ago. Isn't it about time we had something about the other, original half of Travis, Stephen Greif? (...Ed: As you will see from the front page, Stephen Greif is now one of our Honorary Members and we hope to have an interview completed with him in the not too distant future.)

TERESA WARD - Morristown, TN, U.S.A.

Hi to all (especially Clare!). I guess I'll start at the beginning of the newsletter and comment my way to the back... The Pacey twins are adorable. (How could they be otherwise?) I did notice one thing immediately, and I mean this in the MOST COMPLIMENTARY of terms: they inherited their Daddy's ears! Cute.

Jackie: I loved your Scorpio VII con report as much as (and at times, more than) the actual con itself. A real pleasure to see you again; I love meeting people with a similar sense of humour. Sorry to have gotten you out of bed so early; I didn't realise you were a party animal. (...Jac:- Neither did I... yawn) Carol and I promise we're trying to write a story that will fit into a Horizon zine - we can't help it if we're sentimental Americans! And you were right on target in your review of the zine 'Enarrare'. A friend in Australia (thanks, Helen Small) sent me one for Christmas. It is gorgeous! The artwork alone is worth whatever price is asked for it. There is a wealth of talent in Australian fandom.

'Plan Nine from Outer Yorkshire' sounded like a blast. How's about doing something like it again when I can tag along? I promise not to navigate...

Ros Williams: You bring up some interesting points about why Avon didn't like My Hero Tarrant, or Blake. (We know why he didn't like Travis!!) I too would like to know just WHY these two characters are picked on so much, other than the fact that Avon himself didn't like them. Since I know that the world is full of Avon fans, I would like some feedback on this. Tell us the reasoning behind Avon's feelings. More importantly, tell us the reasoning behind YOUR feelings!

Gill Marsden: I agree with your theory about the ideals of fandom, where you said that because one is not supposed to like Tarrant, new fans take this to heart. The same thing was tried on me, when I first viewed the series in Australia. I was told, most emphatically, that I would NOT like Tarrant, and they almost had me believing it! Shame on them (you know who you are!). Fortunately, my good sense prevailed, and I love that curly-haired pilot, so there. Let new fans form their own opinions. I recently let a friend borrow my videos of the series. I kept my mouth shut on who I liked, and she ended up picking Vila as her favourite, stating that Avon was too unlikable, or some such thing. Incidentally, she liked Travis, too. I promise I didn't influence her!

Well, you foolishly asked for suggestions for new photo stickers. How about one of poor old Travis II ALONE?!? There are some scenes in 'Trial' and 'Hostage' that are just begging for someone (hint, Jackie!) to take telepics of them. I figure that if Ros can finally get her Carnell stickers, then if I bug you enough you'll either get tired of me, or take pity, and do up some of my favourite character. Please? (...*Jac.*- *Oh, I suppose so. Watch this space...*)

I have to say that I love the overall pleasantness of the newsletters. Fandom is supposed to be fun, and I'm glad that you still keep it that way. At least the Editor doesn't constantly interrupt letters with mean and snide comments! Humorous ones are great; I just can't stand someone attacking me in print when I can't defend myself. Editors always have the last word, and I'm glad Diane's are nice ones. An insignificant question: Why is the contents section at the back? Well, I'm at the end of the N/L now. One more question: Why is the best photo on the BACK cover? Another great N/L; I'm already looking forward to the next one.

PS. Has any thought ever been given to making Stephen Greif an honorary member of Horizon? Just curious. Diane - tried to send you Mel Gibson, but he was otherwise occupied. Very sorry!

(...*Ed.* to answer your questions: a) glad you like my comments, I'll try to keep them as brilliantly witty but pleasant for you! b) Contents page is at the back because it works out easier to fit it into the final 'file' typesetting-wise! c) the best photos aren't ALWAYS on the back cover! d) Yes, he now IS an Honorary Member.

KIN MING LOOI - East Finchley, London

I received the latest newsletter about a week or so ago. The exclamation of surprise about the newsletter being on time made me wonder: How frequent are the newsletters supposed to be? (...*Ed.* - *theoretically, every 4 and a half months. They've ended up around 6 months for the last 2 years, but we constantly strive to improve this.*)

One thing which worried me was that I seem to have stirred up some trouble over my comments about the Federation. Gill Marsden's and Tim Nicholls' comments had me reaching for my disk files and newsletters to see if I had indeed written what I remembered writing. It was, but much to my embarrassment, I can see how sloppy English on my part has caused some confusion and misunderstanding. When I said "*To the best of my knowledge, one does not get murdered just because one might express the view that the current government might not necessarily be the best one possible.*" I did not mean governments in general (I am aware it happens all too often at present), but rather, the government of this country. Mind you, someone will no doubt dispute that too. Still, I suppose this will teach me to ramble on and be careless with my English!

I look forward to seeing the results of the poetry competition, especially the 'Vogon' section. Don't expect any entries from me, though. I'm only too aware of my limitations in that area, except maybe when it comes to producing a 'Vogon'. Anyway, thanks again for another great newsletter. It is nice to be reminded that I am not the only one with fond memories of Blake's Seven!

WILLIAM COOK - Dyfed, Wales

First, I'd like to thank Ros Williams for asking me about Avon's opinion of Blake wanting to destroy Star One. I think I made the mistake of saying that he and his followers did what they did in an attempt to change the way the Federation allowed its citizens to live. What I should have put, upon considering the question, is that Blake led his group of rebels, in the case of Avon's view of this, Avon did not mind about the possible millions of deaths that would result, to attack with a view to destroying Star One. Yes, my slip of the mind was not to consider that Blake's motives were nothing like Avon's when putting my point of view in the letter regarding the morality of taking this decision. Oops!

I seem to remember another good science fiction series entitled Star Cops. There is a letter by Gena Davies in NL 23 about this series. I believe that the ending of this series has a lot to do with the lack of good, realistic SF on television today, notably no Blake's Seven. Gena writes that at a Doctor Who convention, Chris Boucher said that Star Cops failed because the cast 'were not sexy enough', and the producer was an idiot. I cannot deny this, but I think that there are factors present in BBC policy that are preventing the showing of any more good SF.

I am an avid reader of DWB, and there was an article in a recent edition about the BBC's 'output' of good SF drama in recent years. The DWB article was very revealing about the lack of Blake's Seven repeats; the fact that the BBC have bought *Star Trek: The Next Generation* but have not shown it, etc. They bought this series three years ago! Until recently, Jonathan Powell was Controller of BBC's Drama Department, then for a while, the Controller of BBC1. Jackie Ophir mentioned that there was a photograph of Avon in the Radio Times for the first time in many along year. Until this month, Jonathan Powell has been Controller of BBC1. There is more than a slim chance that the photograph of Avon occurred due to Powell leaving the post of Controller. (*...Jac.- Having worked (briefly) for the Beeb, and having met (briefly) Jonathan Powell, I really don't think so! I wouldn't have thought that JP cared a hoot whether or not there was a photo of Avon in the Radio Times...*) According to the article in DWB, Mr Powell was and is against having serious SF drama on television. At a recent 'It's your BBC' farce, Mr Powell was asked about the BBC acquiring ST:TNG. He said that he found it 'terrible'. Actually, the article reveals that he had only seen a bit of one episode. A major procurement decision made on 'a bit'. He also said that Science Fiction isn't popular, and pointed to Tripods and Star Cops as examples of this. But only three years before his tenure, Blake's 7 was pulling in ten million viewers! Star Trek always did well in peak slots - it lost viewers only when it was moved to 5.40pm! If science fiction is unpopular, why did the BBC purchase 'The Search for Spock' at great expense? (*...Jac.- As far as I'm aware, the delay in screening ST:TNG was something to do with video distribution options taken out by Paramount. Fingers crossed, the buzz is that the series will be hitting our screens this Autumn*).

Coming back to Star Cops, the article also points out that Chris Boucher said at a Convention what a hard job he had getting Star Cops made. He claimed that the Drama Department is run by people who don't like SF and simply don't want to make it.

In my opinion, the BBC must be full of people 'up there' who are of this persuasion. Why else would the BBC keep fobbing us off? I wish that they would stop all this 'contractual problems' rubbish. Nowadays, the BBC are showing more and yet more cheap, glitzy game shows, rubbish talk shows, cerebral cortex vegetating American imports, and worse. I was considering buying the three Blake's 7 BBC videos, until I read that the episodes in them have been butchered by editing. So I thought, why bother? Yet one can't see Blake's 7 any more, and I do not know where, if ever, I can see the episodes again.

The convention reports and Kerr Ajay's Tec-Sec were the best parts of N/L 23. As regards the Tec-Sec, this is what the sort of programme Blake's Seven has for me in its attractiveness. Some of its attractiveness, anyway - not the be all and end all of why I like this programme. I like science fiction with a capital S as well as a capital F. Science fiction is about the undertone and overtone of now. Real issues, presented in a fantastic format, is not an escape from these real issues.

I have to agree with Judith Ellison about the Altas. I seem to remember that one of the Altas was killed. As far as my memory goes, it had something to do with two wires, connected to the neck by a collar, which, when pulled out of their connections, resulted in the death of the Alta. If this is so, then the logical corollary is that the Altas were kept alive by their electric equipment. They must have been altered by the System into being the owners of a nervous system that could not function without their collars and wire attachments. Evidently the Altas and their guards were a living tissue and artificial construction, known in SF as a cyborg (an abbreviated name for cybernetic organism). This, to me, places them closer to Travis rather than mutoids. However, when you consider the mutoids required blood plasma which had to be artificially introduced into their bodies, I suppose that Judith is correct to put them on a par with the Altas. Both mutoids and Altas were dependent on the technologies that made them what they were. Much more than Travis was for the proper functioning of his vital functions. It's a question of how you define the differences/similarities, I suppose.

The N/Ls are getting nicer and nicer looking each time. They are now just like a magazine in a newsagent, in their presentation. Let's please have something amateur looking in something 'by fans, for fans'. Please. It may sound a daft request, but part of the appeal of N/Ls, amateur fan magazines, etc for me, is the 'home-made' air. However, I have absolutely NOTHING against tidy, well set out N/Ls, please don't get the wrong end of the stick! I mean, heaven knows I can't imagine the problems you members of the Horizon Committee have in just getting N/Ls done! Please treat the above paragraph as the prattling of a grateful member. (*...Ed: Really, some people are just never satisfied! Sorry, William, I'm afraid Horizon's caveman days are over - it's Hi-Tec for us now.*)

The articles about the Federation in general, followed by the one about Servalan were thought-provoking. Upon considering the issues contained in them, I have basically this to say: The Federation was necessary to stop starvation, chaos, but that does not mean that the type of society they established was the best for its citizens. The Federation, the fascism and communism, does not value the individual in the equation of human nature's requirements, and human society's requirements. The Federation is the equally bad, opposite extreme of anarchy. Of course, every society has to have its restrictions on its members, but these restrictions must have freedoms in other ways, in order to counterbalance the restriction. This is so that the society works both on an individual and collective way, for itself, which is for the good of all. The trouble with the Federation is that it thought that the best way to manage its law and order, is through total, centrally controlled restriction, without individual freedom for the greater part of the populace. What we also have to consider is the fact that the Federation is an expanding empire. Like all totalitarian societies, once it is in control, it will NEVER let you peacefully dislodge it from a position of control. The recent events in China make that point, do they not? Also, Blake had tried to peacefully get rid of the Federation, and I seem to remember from 'The Way Back', he witnessed the slaughter of a peaceful demonstration. The demonstrators were just shot down in cold blood. The moral of the story is this: peaceful methods do not persuade the likes of Hitler from forcibly imposing their will on others. Therefore, the Federation cannot be stopped by polite requests. I admit these issues are not exactly black and white, but although life is a

complicated picture, morally it is still composed of the two basic shades. Tim Nicholls says, what gave Blake the right to say the Federation was wrong and he was right? Well, how about freedom of speech? However, I do think that destroying Star One was a decision of gigantic moral question. But Blake had no choice.

Ira Lee Gosset is right to say that 'Blake' is a name for any leader who is against the Federation. Yes, it carried on without him. In 'Aftermath', Dayna's father says to Avon "You and Blake of the Liberator were magnificent, my friend." The only problem I see with this, is that someone who hears of 'Blake' might get the wrong end of the stick. They may assume him to be in a bit too idealistic light. Mind you, can't blame Federation citizens, can you?

Just coming back to Judith Ellison's point about the Altas and mutoids. Here is a question: compare the Federation with System - what do other fans think of the idea that the Federation is a Fascist empire, and the System is a Communist empire? Compare the differences and similarities.

CAROL MCCOY - Poland, Ohio, U.S.A.

As usual, your newsletter was excellent; full of a variety of interesting information and so well presented. It was a delight to see the four beautiful little people on page 4. The Gies and Pacey girls are adorable and I hope we get to see future photos of them growing up. Congratulations on the very successful Tenth Anniversary Charity Appeal. It is wonderful that so many very worthy causes benefited from your fine efforts.

Jackie's Scorpio report and Sheelagh Wells' interview were wonderful and brought back many special memories (sorry for waking you, Jackie, but if you weren't such a carouser, 9am wouldn't have seemed the middle of the night). Her photos are also superb and were much appreciated. The trek to B7 location sights sounded marvelously insane. I do wish I could see those videos! How about bringing them to an American con sometime?

Now on to my main topic - Del Tarrant. Yes, I'm one of the enlightened few who admit to having Tarrant as their favourite B7 character. When I found B7, I had no idea that fandom existed or that Tarrant was much maligned. I came in during the third season and thought that young, exuberant pilot was most interesting. To find out later that he was unpopular was disheartening but also brought out my stubborn streak to root for him even more enthusiastically. Tarrant is wonderfully portrayed by Steven Pacey, who made him a very fascinating, complex character. The character had his faults, mostly the faults of youth, but that made him more believable and well rounded. And Avon, who is almost universally adored, had his faults as well.

There are those who can't look beyond Tarrant's bullying of Vila in 'City' to find the good qualities that abound. When Tarrant forced Vila to go to Keezarn, he did it for the good of the ship and crew, while believing, a bit naively, that Vila would be perfectly safe. He later shows his loyalty by refusing to abandon Vila (unlike Avon), and even is big enough to apologise.

Another pet peeve of mine is having Tarrant blamed for the Gauda Prime fiasco (which seems more an American misdemeanour). Again Tarrant was only trying to protect his friends by 'condemning' Blake. He proved himself more than once in that particular episode by staying with Scorpio while the others escaped, breaking away from the armed Blake and Arlen to warn his crewmates of Blake's 'betrayal', and by returning for Avon in the midst of enemy troopers in the tracking gallery. Why can't fans give Tarrant a second, open-minded look, remembering that he is young and military trained. With that in mind, his bullying and impetuosity are understandable and his virtues far outweigh his few faults.

LEE SARTAIN - Chippenham, Wiltshire

Having heard that Terry Nation has further plans for the B7 series, I must register my reticent enthusiasm about the prospects of any further happenings. Most evidence suggests that SF (of the BBC kind) has been in decline for many years. The arguments can either relate to the total disinterest of the viewing public toward in-house SF or the apathy of the Beeb to indulge itself in such projects.

So what is the present state of SF on our screens? There is, of course, Doctor Who, the only continuing SF in the traditional 'cult' sense, while any other SF is transmitted in the form of humour as with Red Dwarf. Doctor Who is now on the verge of its 27th year and its fate has never been so in doubt. Last season the show clocked up some of its lowest viewing figures in its history, at its lowest 3.1 million and at the highest 5 million. Not staggeringly impressive when considering its past performances reaching usually over 8 million and at its peak 16 million. So, is humour the only way to portray SF to an audience at large? Red Dwarf recently had its third season and although entertaining is hardly a fitting replacement for the more definitive dramas.

The lack of positive viewing figures for Doctor Who hardly make for the BBC to adventure into any other areas of SF. It is important to analyse the reason for the Doctor's failings. Firstly, there is the hugely popular Coronation Street played simultaneously on the opposing channel. With bad timing and pitiful publicity there could hardly be a better way for the BBC to dupe the population into accepting the death of TV SF (except of course through Pylene 50 in our coffee). So even if B7 was to return, it would naturally be under impossible budget restrictions (the entire effects budget for the last season of Doctor Who was equal to that of one episode of Red Dwarf), bad timing and typical BBC publicity.

My belief is that there is an audience for SF on the television, especially for repeats. (We all know THAT story) and a new B7 series being suitably processed would be successful. It is merely my natural cynicism that makes me feel that the BBC have not the adequate imagination to endorse a new series. But then the Federation were immobile against public opinion. Does anybody want to attack BBC Centre?

SUE WILKES - Warrington, Cheshire

First of all, a cry for help about all the abbreviations. Some of them are fairly obvious, but I think one or two of the more obscure ones ought to be explained, like DWB (something to do with Doctor Who?). (*...Jac.- DWB is, in fact, just that! Originally, I think, 'Doctor Who Bulletin', it then became 'Dream Watch Bulletin', and is now simply known as DWB. It's a publication that deals mostly with Doctor Who, but has given B7 quite a lot of articles and features.*)

Next, what happened to the freebies we used to get for entering the competitions? Do you get lots of entries now, so it is no longer necessary, or did it just get too expensive? (*...Jac.- We didn't give bribes - er - freebies for the poetry competition, because we guessed (rightly!) that we'd be flooded with entries anyway. There were free photostamps on the competition before that, though.*)

At last, a Con is coming to my neck of the woods! I'm hoping to visit Space City, if only for a day. I'll be able to write my own con report and bore the pants off everyone else.

I think the letters of comment have brightened up the newsletter no end. Was the Samantha Grant story a true one? (*...Ed: As far as we know, yes, it was.*)

I'm sick and tired of everyone cracking on that Avon was mad. He's found out, from Orac, that Blake is now a bounty hunter (something the 'old' Blake would never have done, as Vila himself pointed out). Everything points to the fact that they've walked into a trap - and Tarrant has just told him that Blake is working for the Federation. Although it seems to be fashionable to 'knock' Tarrant, Avon has obviously grown to rely on his judgement somewhat (although he would never admit it). Avon has never wasted time agonizing about what to do with people who've betrayed him, so I think by shooting Blake, he was acting perfectly in character. There is no need for dark complicated theories about Avon's psyche. Well, that's my theory anyway. It's impossible to tell from his expression, as he stands over Blake's body, whether he realises he's just made a massive mistake or is just coming to terms with his own deep-seated feelings for Blake.

KLAUS JOERGENSEN - Farum, Denmark

I would like to use the opportunity to say a little about the N/Ls. The paper quality is excellent, the pictures are wonderful, the editorial part in the beginning is very humorous. The con reports are better than being there yourself (I've never attended any, but it feels like it), the interviews are intelligent, the amount of merchandise enchanting and the rest is paradise too. How did I survive before getting Horizon's N/Ls? Well, I don't know either! (*...Ed: How much money was it we promised you?*)

LEIGH MOTOOKA - Poughkeepsie, NY, U.S.A.

The newsletter looks really sharp! I appreciate all the lovely photos, including the one of your beautiful daughters. Steven's kids are adorable, too. They look so much like their father! (They have his eyes... and his ears!) Letters were so interesting this time around, especially the ones offering explanations of why the 4th series went over like a lead balloon in the U.K. Thought I'd comment on a few of them...

William Cook: I'm flattered that you think B7 looked more American during the 4th series, as I found it a tremendous improvement. The original title sequence is nice, but old-fashioned and static. The dynamic, modern 4th series title sequence is much more exciting to watch, and extremely authentic as well. The whole 'look' of the 4th series was better. The ship, teleport bracelets and clipguns appeared sturdy and very authentic compared with their plasticky counterparts of earlier series - more like things that are actually meant to be used. The Liberator is prettier than Scorpio, but from an engineer's point of view, Scorpio is far more realistically designed. But honestly, the 'look' of the show isn't that important. I've yet to meet a B7 fan who was drawn to the show because of its spiffy props and special effects!

Ros Williams: You're right, Avon was a different character in each series. That's one of the best aspects of B7. The characters change, as real people do: not always for the better. I think 4th series Avon was a natural development of the 1st-2nd-3rd series Avons. (Though I'm hard-pressed to see any connection between the hero of Avon: A Terrible Aspect and the Avon we all know and tolerate!). By the way, I don't agree that Avon hated Tarrant. In fact, I could argue that Avon and Tarrant had a better relationship than, say, Avon and Vila or Avon and Cally. Avon seemed far more upset about abandoning Tarrant on the crashing Scorpio than he did over Malodaaar, or about Cally's death.

I too would like to see an interview with Chris Boucher. He's the writer who had the best understanding of the characters, and who gave us such gems as 'Star One', 'City at the Edge of the World', 'Rumours of Death', 'Deathwatch' and 'Blake'.

Clare Driver: You are obviously an unusually discerning and intelligent person, to appreciate Tarrant's good qualities! But I disagree with you about Avon. I don't find him objectionable at all - he's probably my second favourite character.

Elaine Easton: Your theory about the timing of the 4th series is the most plausible I've heard so far. The characters certainly were different in the 4th series: all of them, not just Avon. (Am I the only person in the known universe who LIKES 4th series Avon?)

Well, I am eagerly looking forward to the next issue. Keep up the good w

(wretched laser printer...)

LINDSAY BONSER - Birmingham, England

Like Karen Foley, I too have been in and out of B7 fandom since I got hooked ten years ago. I could hardly believe that it has been that long since I sat down eagerly to watch 'The Way Back', the first episode in a new science fiction series, never anticipating that a decade on I would still be enjoying it, albeit in the form of your newsletters and zines. I would like to see a few more of 'the stars' in person, as yet I have never attended a convention. I did see Steven Pacey in 'West Side Story' years ago at the Grand Theatre in Wolverhampton. I must admit I was more of a Tarrant fan after that than I had been previously. Steven is incredibly tall and has a lovely singing voice. I was also lucky enough to see Jacqueline Pearce in Chichester last summer. My claim to fame is that she held Woolies door open for me! It had been a miserable day until then, as I had been busy cramming for my finals, but that really made my day.

I enjoy reading other fans' letters and would like to add my opinion to a few:

Shirley Jacobson, Illinois (nice to read letters from overseas) - yes, I think Michael Keating looks similar to Robert Englund, though I feel the resemblance between Michael and Phil Collins is stronger.

Elaine Easton - I too fell in love with the Avon portrayed in the first three seasons and though I still admired him in the fourth series I felt he wasn't the same. I agree with characters changing and I think it was a believable development, but still something was missing. For this reason I agreed with the point raised by Gena Davies. I haven't read Paul's book yet, but I don't think I would enjoy it as much as I could if Avon is portrayed as a professional hitman. The fact that Avon wasn't a trained killer was fundamental to my interpretation of his character and his possible reasons for what he did. I would find it difficult at this stage to alter my views of him and this would affect my enjoyment of the novel.

I read the review by Ros Williams of 'The Mind of a Man is a Double-Edged Sword' and she really whetted my appetite, but where oh where can I get a copy? (...Ed: I believe copies are available from Jude Wilson, 1043-2 Stowell Dr., Rochester, NY 14616, USA. Suggest you send 2 IRCs or a 45c stamp for info.)

(...Ed: *Lindsey*, on behalf of the committee and members of *Horizon*, we take this opportunity of congratulating you on your marriage and wishing you and your new husband every happiness for the future.)

JILL YOUNG - Winscombe, Avon

Horizon is still the best club I have ever belonged to - it combines a wide and interesting coverage of B7, and personal and friendly attention. And the newsletters and zines are excellent. Don't stop, will you?! (...Ed: *probably not!*)

MARC RHODES-TAYLOR - Swindon, Wiltshire

Re: Future Merchandise - T-shirts, mugs, calendars and notepaper all sound like good ideas. Having read, re-read and re-re-read my NLs several times over, the centre pages are falling out, the covers are falling off, they have had food spilt on them, washing powder spilt into them... may I suggest binders to protect sets of NLs, or perhaps more secure bindings of some form? Also, how about Blake's 7 teddy bears? (Well, Avon has one!) (...Ed: *Hope our plethora of new merchandise will keep you happy for a while! As for binders, though, I'm afraid you'll have to buy your own. Most stationers sell them.*)

Re: LOX (sic) in NL23 -

William Cook: Re: series 4. The first three series of Blake's Seven had an atmosphere of tension and menace, leavened by humour, and a sense of purpose. I think the fourth series lacked a little of this, detracting from its quality. Possibly the absence of Terry Nation and the fact that he didn't write any of the scripts made the quality slip. Having a title sequence with no real relevance to Blake's Seven and a closing sequence like a pop tune rather than something befitting a serious drama can't have helped, either.

Federation Security, Virn: Force wall activated, neutron flare shield activated, neutron cannons cleared. Tell the Anti-Subversive Section to do their worst!

Gena Davies: An interview with Chris Boucher would be a good idea. After all, he was series script editor for all four series, and wrote nine episodes too (including the favourite 'Rumours of Death'). Scott Fredericks (alias Carnell) might prove popular, too...

In the television series any significant changes that occurred became standard as everyone saw them. But if you put such changes into a story, will everyone read that story and maintain continuity when writing theirs? You can't risk it, as it would change the parameters of the Seven's relationship to each other and their situation. This is going to limit fanzine literature.

Tim Nicholls: The general impression I received from watching Blake's Seven was that the Federation was evil, and therefore should be fought. How alive are you when you can't make any real decisions because everyone is being pumped full of drugs? What might happen next?

DAVE GOSBEE - Luton, Bedfordshire

I am a brand new member of the Horizon Society. My first N/L was the last one (No.23). I have to say, so far so good, an excellent N/L. So much to read! I see from back issues I've read that you like 'silly' facts 'n' figures, well so do I. It's nice to see humour in newsletters. How about this for a suggestion? (Seeing I'm a new member it may have been done before in an earlier issue, but here goes anyway.) A Top 52 Chart would be interesting. The most popular episode amongst us members being No.1 ('Animals'?? - Hee Hee) next most popular No.2, etc. (*...Ed: from time to time we do have questionnaires and also 'computer statistics' about such things. But not this time!*)

JAN BLIGHT - Hayling Island, Hants.

My two sons and I keep the worst of the withdrawal symptoms at bay by watching B7 videos and even listening to audio tapes of the programme made on an ancient reel-to-reel machine with external mike. It takes real dedication to ignore the chimes of our dining room clock interrupting Zen! We have every one of the Marvel B7 magazines cherished in a binder and our conversation is frequently larded with quotes from the episode. What joy then, to discover Horizon and realise we were not alone in our madness. The newsletter is a delight, and so professional. As Avon said when Vila produced the crystals in 'City' - "I'm impressed!"

KATHRYN ANDERSEN - West Heidelberg, Victoria, Australia

Great to get my N/L by airmail for the first time! This way I have a chance to comment before my comments are totally irrelevant. As usual, terribly impressive layout and yummy photos. This N/L is so thick (er, heavy) that if I attempted to comment on everything I would be here all day... (and I don't have all day!)

Con Reports... keep 'em coming! Well, particularly if Jackie Ophir writes them - *she* knows how to make it interesting; dramatically shown by the contrast of her report of Scorpio VII versus Shirley Jacobson's report, which seemed to be mostly 'I did this' and 'I liked that' - sorry, Shirley! So as not to give Jackie all the kudos, Steve Haines' report (Plan Nine from Outer Yorkshire) was just as good, if not as long... oh dear, he's on the committee too. Gee, Diane, re: your comment to Elaine Easton in the LOC section, I didn't mean to crawl to committee members, really I didn't! (previous sentence said in mock-cringing voice...) (*...Ed: I suppose it can't be helped if we are all so amazingly intelligent, talented and witty!!*)

Ajay "Kerr" Tandon's got some theories on IMIPAK, has he? (Funny how everyone, including me, misspells that word - it should be K instead of C - the K stands for 'Key', remember?) I'd have to see the episode again before I could comment.

Now the juicy bit - the LOCs! Page by page, piece by piece... A lot of people seem to be commenting about the morality of Blake versus the morality of the Federation, the opinions ranging from 'Blake was right to fight them' to 'The Federation was a bastion against chaos...'. Well, we have some fundamental questions here. Is it right to fight oppression with violence? Does it work? Does non-violence work? What is the aim of a 'freedom-fighter' anyway? Is oppression ever justified? What is oppression? Is there even such a thing as a perfect government? What should the aim of government be anyway? And so on.

To put my oar in; Blake was right to resist the Federation, but I suspect his motives were a mixture of revenge and idealism - and he gave no thought to what would happen if he actually achieved his goal. Also, for me, violence is 'out'. War is 'justified' murder. Blow up as many installations as you like, just as long as you don't kill anyone. Though watching a show like B7, one tends not to care enough about all those dead troopers - even I don't, so I guess I'm being inconsistent (sigh). As for the Federation, when an institution begins to stop considering concrete things like 'individuals' more important than something like 'the state', then it is high time for a change. To compare it with other regimes and say 'it is not so bad' is irrelevant - it is not 'good enough'. (Don't ask me what I think the perfect government would be - you might not like the answer!) So... here I am, more of an idealist than Blake, saying that none of them were right. If I'd been there, I'd probably have died in the first episode! I don't agree with Avon's philosophy - that to survive is the most important thing one can do. Regarding that gift, 'life', I'm a quality vs. quantity person. I think an interview with Chris Boucher would be a great idea! Not just to ask him about B7, but other things he has worked on, like the Omega Factor and Star Cops (poles apart, they are!). For the zine reviews, could you please put in the address of the contact for the zine being reviewed? Otherwise how are people going to follow up a rave review if they don't know who to write to? (*...Ed: Good point. Quite often zines reviewed are advertised in Orac's Oddments. We'll try to make sure they appear SOMEWHERE in future.*)

Poetry: Cheryl Beresford, et al. Well, I'll pick on Cheryl first. "Why should poetry rhyme?" Doesn't have to. Doesn't NOT have to, either! Just look at so many classic poets - they kept to rhythm and rhyme and painted vivid word-pictures while doing so! Argue with them before you say that "Rhyme should be used for comedy"... ah, but are you saying it is more difficult and therefore is usually done badly? I'd be tempted to argue that most fan poetry is done badly, whether it rhymes or not! At least you can say one thing for rhyming poetry - it rhymes! The fact that you call free verse 'prose' makes me wonder about your knowledge of poetry, I'm afraid! Anyway, I can sympathise with Diane's comments about how she dislikes poetry. Because most fan poetry is crap. Of different kinds, of course. There's the rhyming-couplet type which Cheryl was complaining about. Then there's the chopped-up sentence type, for example:

Blake.

I didn't know
what I thought
of you.
And I couldn't see
what you saw
in me.

(actually they're usually worse than that). But it isn't just the style which is bad about these rotten poems, it's the sheer emoting! You know, like having thoughts of Avon-drowning-in-guilt-immediately-after-he's-shot-Blake, raving on about being best friends, or the best part of each other, or whatever - and it isn't Avon's emotion that is coming out on the page, it is the author's emotion, even though all the "I's in the poem indicate it is supposed to be the character's thoughts in the poem. It doesn't matter whether it is actually true that they were reflections of each other, or whatever it is the poem is emoting about - it you put it in the first person with the character speaking, you can't have him/her saying something totally out of character, something that they wouldn't even think! But even complaining about characterisation isn't really what I'm on about - it's just that most of the poetry (BIG NOTE HERE - there exist in Fandom some excellent poets, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie - I am NOT talking about them!) where was I? Oh, most of the poetry is just not poetry. A poem is distilled meaning; every word counts. If you have an 'and' it probably shouldn't be there, unless for the sake of rhythm (even free verse has a sort of rhythm - a speaking rhythm). I think I'd better shut up. But while I'm on the subject - the poetry competition! Gee, I don't know if I can get myself inspired to a deadline! (Shorter for me, because I have to post it earlier). Not that I'd have a chance of winning anyway. But twenty lines! Limiting it to 20 lines! You can't be serious! How am I going to enter my Blake's 7 ABC in the humorous section? Chop it off at J? Or at T, if I make them extra long lines? But seriously, how long is a piece of string? How long is a poem? As long as it is! I cannot limit myself to 20 lines if the poem calls for 28 or 22 or 30! It would spoil the poem! Okay, I can understand you don't want 3-page epics, but 20 lines is too arbitrary (and too short - there are 25 - 30 lines per page on your average sheet of lined paper and a 1-page poem is only reasonable). I would like to enter, but if my poems happen to be longer than 20 lines, are you going to disqualify me? Or will I have to mangle my poem so it fits on 20 lines or less? (Okay, this is the plural 'you' - it's Jackie I should be complaining to, I'm sorry). (...Jac - Phew, what a tirade! First - alright, I admit that 20 lines was a bit arbitrary, but as you say, we didn't want 3-page epics and I figured that if Shakespeare's sonnets are fourteen lines long, and Emily Dickinson can distil intense emotion into eight lines, then a 20-line limit isn't that unreasonable! Anyway, we were pretty flexible, & if a poem over-ran by a few lines it wasn't disqualified. I think you're being a bit hard on fan poets - we many superb entries in the competition, and had to create two extra categories to accommodate all the winners! But of that, and other poetic matters, in the Competition Results).

Ah, the slogan stickers! I like slogan stickers, I stick them on the backs of my envelopes - I just don't like these slogan stickers; I would be embarrassed to stick most of them on any of my envelopes! I mean 'Vila reaches the parts other thieves cannot reach' or 'Get ahead - get a Muller'?! Wouldn't it be possible to put favourite quotes on stickers instead? Like 'I intend to live forever or die trying' or 'I am not expendable, I am not stupid and I am not going' or 'The Himalayas are quite tall this time of year' - that sort of thing! (...Ed: Yes, I agree that some of the slogans are a little... esoteric? We're gradually pruning the more obscure ones and replacing them with something more fitting. Notice we've 'borrowed' one of Vila's best quotes for our Club Motto... "We're going to live forever, or die trying..."

But now...

The time has come

To go to bed

For I must rest

My weary head

(Sorry!)

To fill this
unscheduled
space - here's
a sample page
from Kathy Hanson's
cartoon calendar
(see Orac's Oddments)



AN INFORMAL CHAT WITH COLIN DAVIS

Reported by Jackie Ophir

When I mentioned to somebody that we were going to be interviewing Colin Davis, they said: "Oh, so there really is such a person? He's the only one who hasn't got anything written about him in the programme guide!"

Yes, Colin Davis does indeed exist. He's been a full-time writer for about fifteen years, with a list of credits two pages long! He's written literally dozens of scripts for radio and television, and two books of jokes. He lives near Exeter, and we arranged to meet him the day after seeing Gareth Thomas in *King Lear*. (What a splendid weekend that was!)

Nicola Best, Fliss and Kevin Davies, Steve Haines, Crystal Denton, Ben Clements and I met Colin in a small village tea shop (they had to push three tables together to accommodate all of us!). Usually, we wine and dine our interviewees before bombarding them with questions, but no sooner had we introduced ourselves than Colin immediately started chatting about *Blake's 7*! There was a brief panicked flurry while I got out the tape-recorder, discovered that the batteries were dead, borrowed a couple from Ben Clements (forever in your debt, Ben!) and set it going. After that we got down to the serious business of ordering tea and scones and cream and jam, and carried on with the chat:

COLIN: I assumed everybody had long forgotten *Blakes 7*.

JACKIE: No, no - far from it.

COLIN: But I could never understand the attitude of the BBC. It always seemed to me that it was a maximum-type show. It was so popular, wasn't it? It was pulling huge numbers of viewers opposite Coronation Street. So to pick up the ratings, whatever they were -

NICOLA: I think at one stage it was about 14 million viewers.

KEVIN: In the third season it was the second most popular programme that the BBC put out.

COLIN: I just couldn't imagine the Yanks letting a series drop like that. They would just let it run and run and run. If the Yanks had created that show, they would have made twenty seasons!

NICOLA: In fact, it's American fandom that has given it a shot in the arm, really. Interest was gradually slowing down in this country, but now it's all been rekindled.

JACKIE: When the Americans started to get heavily into it, I think that the British got all patriotic and said, "Hang on a second, this is *OUR* programme!"

KEVIN: I think the Beeb got a bit embarrassed about the fact that a TV series dealing with terrorists was so popular.

COLIN: Oh, do you think it was that?

JACKIE: It's a theory.

COLIN: But can the BBC seriously think - can that be a *SERIOUS* theory, that it was about terrorists? I mean, what's the *A-Team*? They're terrorists, aren't they? They go out and blow up whatever they want to blow up!

KEVIN: Mind you, the next science fiction series the BBC showed after *Blakes 7* was *Star Cops* - representatives of law and order.

COLIN: And that was a very boring old show! (LAUGH)

NICOLA: Do you watch a lot of science fiction?

COLIN: Um... when it's on! It's quite hard work, science fiction. You need to keep up good ideas.

NICOLA: I can't understand how the BBC still manage to turn up good quality science fiction time after time, and then ruin it! They do it with so many programmes, like *The Survivors* and *Doomwatch* - and then they seem to disown them!

STEVE: They always seem to have a rather dim view of science fiction. The way they've shunted *Doctor Who* around recently is a fair indication.

COLIN: Well, yes. They ran out of ideas, really, on *Doctor Who*, didn't they? I mean, it's all such a bore now - two yawns and gone!

NICOLA: You'll have to write some good stories for them!

COLIN: I don't know, it's such a closed-in cabal. But then, so is most sorts of writing for other people's series. It's much better to try and place your own stuff. On a series there's always a little gang of people that know each other, and if you get on with them, then that's fine. But I don't like contacting a series and asking if I can write for them, because you tend to be vetted by those people asking you leading questions to see whether you're up their street or not. You might think, 'Ah, that series, yes, so-and-so's working on that, I think I'll ring him up.' But by the time you get it together, everything's been changed; they've got a new producer, a new script editor, and they're looking for something totally different. They want to blow away the cobwebs, brand new things are going to happen - and lo and behold - they get their end credit, and so it goes on.

Well, Blake's 7 was a series, and I only did one episode, but what happened was that I rang Chris Boucher, and it just happened to be the right day, when he was just about to start work on series four.

JACKIE: Were you touting around for work at the time, ringing around script editors?

COLIN: No... what was I doing? I'd just done some radio plays for the BBC, and I heard that the buzz going around Television Centre was that Blake's 7 was going to be looking for new script writers. So it just happened that I got a piece of information right when somebody was looking for script writers, which is very rare. I gave Chris Boucher a ring the next day, and as I said, I just happened to pick the right day. Chris said: "Come round and have a drink," and over the drink, we just... actually, we got through quite a few! And we got on well, and everything seemed OK.

JACKIE: Did you have the idea for your episode when you approached him?

COLIN: No, I didn't have a clue! After that first meeting, which was just a general chat, he invited a few of us writers around, and we all trooped off to a viewing theatre to watch episodes of Blake's 7 that Chris had written! After that, we had some more beer, and Chris explained about the fourth series. He said: "We're getting a new spaceship, and as the crew are really down on their uppers, the only decision Vere Lorrimer and I have taken is that we'll build all the stories around their getting things. They've got nothing - so they'll get things." Then he said: "Go away and have a think. And if you come up with a good yarn about somebody getting something - we'll use it." And I said that it seemed to me that the best thing they could get would be money - like a bank robbery or something, and Chris agreed. And gold is basically gold - doesn't matter whether it's set in the 19th century or the 23rd. Then after that chat, I actually produced four yarns, just to cover myself. It only takes a couple of pages to rattle off what the story would be.

JACKIE: Can you tell us what the others were?

COLIN: There was one that Chris said he couldn't do, because he'd already got one that was very similar, so that was that one out. Then I'd thought up a weird story about a frame-up, which would have been a chance to bring Blake back into the series. A really quite clever, devious frame-up. That was a two-part idea that would have led into the end of the series, so it wasn't really two separate stories, it was one. But Chris said that he couldn't use that idea either, because I was imagining things about the past of Blake that contradicted our little Blake's 7 'Bible'. Actually, I never believe things like that, because the story is the most important thing. You can get around anything, find the twist in any story. And in fact, that was Chris's philosophy too. But the truth was that he was going to bring Blake back in the last episode anyway, and he knew what he wanted to do at the end of the series. So I was just left with the bank robbery, which Chris said was a great idea. The only problem with it was that it depended on so many layers of double-crossing! You know - *I know that you're going to think that he's going to think that I'm going to think that you're going to think that he's going think...* But it all seemed quite simple when Chris and I chatted it, and at that stage, the storyline stage, everything was great.

Then I did a first draft, and Chris wrote back and said, "What a load of ****!" So we talked over the phone about what was bothering him, then I did a second draft and he wrote back and said that it was great! I wasn't terribly experienced at the time, but since then I've learned that when people say that something's great or that it's useless - whichever they say, I always ask them what they want done next. And you have to get remarkably unmoved by expressions either of disgust or amazement because one way or the other they're always going to want things tinkered with, until they've actually decided they don't want it tinkered with any more and come up with the cheque! And over the years, I've developed a sort of technique. If anybody says anything critical about things I write, I say: "Yeah, yeah, that's very interesting. I really appreciate your comments. What are you looking for?" And they then let on their ideas of what they would have done if they'd written it themselves. And then I say: "Gosh, what an amazing idea!" Because that totally disarms criticism, you see! Basically, people expect writers to say: "Oh no, you've got to do it my way," and they're all up ready spurring for a fight. But experience has taught me that the thing to say is, "Oh yes, that's clever, I'm really struck on that idea!" Then you go back and you sort of incorporate their idea and still try to keep it the way you want it, as far as possible! But the minute you've told the producer or script editor that their idea is absolutely cracking, and only someone with the benefit of their years of experience could come up with an idea like that - as soon as you've told somebody that, then there is an enormous willingness to honour anything that you want to do!

(LAUGHTER, AND A PAUSE FOR POURING OF TEA)

NICOLA: Did you know Blake's 7 before you wrote for it? Had you watched it?

COLIN: Yeah - in the sense that I remember the first episode, I remember the second. The series changed after that though, didn't it? When it first started out, what I thought we were going to see was the story of a sort of heavy police state and men on the run in space. Then they found this big amazing space ship and it became a different sort of series, and I left it. But then I kept seeing odd episodes from time to time in the next couple of years. I suppose I'd seen in all about seven or eight episodes from the first three series. You couldn't help it - if you were in another room and it was on, you couldn't help going in to have a look! The music was so super, wasn't it? Nice title theme.

NICOLA: Do you remember any particular episode? One that you wouldn't have minded writing yourself?

COLIN: Yes... I'm trying to think, now. I quite liked the one Chris Boucher did, a story about androids. They did a western-style shoot out in an old... 'Deathwatch'! And in the end they had to kill off this android and it looked so real, it was like killing a human being. I saw a lot of Chris' stuff when I went in to gen up on the style of the series. He's really good on twists. Clever adjustments of the plot.

Chris has gone on to be quite successful, but I don't suppose he's done anything as distinctively his style as Blake's 7. After Blake he did a bit of *Shoestring*, *Bergerac*, he did *Juliet Bravo* for a while. And last I heard, he was on *The*

Bill. But on those sort of things you're just one of a pack, just one of six jobbing script editors. You never watch *The Bill* and think, 'Ah yeah, that's something Chris Boucher did'. Whereas with *Blake's 7*, you could tell. He put a very individual stamp on it.

JACKIE:

Did you get to meet Terry Nation?

COLIN:

No, he'd already gone when I came on to it. (INTERRUPTED BY THE ARRIVAL OF CARROT CAKE, SHORTBREAD, SCONES, AND A FRESH POT OF TEA) I didn't know the earlier producers, either. Vere Lorrimer was our producer, and he took over in Series 4. He's an incredibly experienced old hand producer, but he took it on at a time when just like they were trying to wind up *Blake's 7*, the BBC were very actively trying to wind up Vere Lorrimer. The word had gone round that he was yesterday's news and that's why they put him on *Blake's 7*. And the image I'd had before I'd met him was that I was going to meet this guy who was really bummed out and washed up. And he wasn't. He was in his early sixties, I suppose. But he was a real enthusiast, a tremendous guy. And for this political organisation to be jockeying the bloke to try and get rid of him....

I stayed in touch with Vere for quite some time. There was a writer called Adrian Reed, who didn't do any *Blake's 7*, but was there on the day I went to see Chris Boucher. Adrian and I came up with a super thriller, and we showed it to Vere and he really wanted to do it. But then he rang up about two weeks later and said: "Look, I don't like to say this, but I'm getting early retirement next week, so there's actually nothing I can do with this script. If you like, I will take it up with the head of BBC series, and I'll try and argue for it, but at the moment I am the hand of death on it!" It all became academic anyway, because Adrian then died...



JACKIE:

Oh, God!

COLIN:

The BBC have a lot to answer for. They are a cruddy organisation!

(PAUSE FOR MORE TEA)

JACKIE:

Did you feel that you knew the B7 characters well enough to write dialogue for them, and so on?

COLIN:

No, but to be honest, it was cyphering in a way. You had to just find a simple peg for each character. It was very easy, you see, to write little scenes for Soolin, because you could just have her saying something slightly nastier than most people would ever dream of saying! If I had an understanding, sympathetic feed remark from anybody else, Soolin would then say something which would prove how nasty and deadly she really was! Chris had done half a page about her, a little initial description when they were inventing the character, proving quite conclusively that she was a raving psychopath!

Avon had to have an extremely clever, fencing style - so much so that he's like a really brilliant chess player. It struck me that the important thing between him and Servalan was the respect for a brilliant enemy. Two brilliant chess players. It's rather like that scene in that film 'Zulu', (totally nothing like the characters, of course) - you know, when they've all been surrounded, and then they see the Zulus come again, only this time it's not to kill them, but to show respect for great warriors. That was the sort of relationship between Avon and Servalan. With this undercurrent of - I mean you just knew from the episode that whatever they said - even a line like: (PUTS ON AVON VOICE) "Terribly clever!" - what they were really saying was: "I want your body!" And that's the way they played it! They were always - (DEMONSTRATES WITH SMOULDERING LOOK)

STEVE:

Did you identify with any of the characters while you were writing it?

COLIN:

Um... Identify with them. No, not really. I suppose I would identify most with the bloke I invented. The chap called Keiller, who set them all up. The others were already existing characters. But then I'd imagined that the bloke who set up the robbery would be a very smooth, you know, South African type of bloke. Very ungiving, expressionless. That's what I thought I was writing! But Brian Lighthill, the director, rang me up and said: "I've got this great idea - what about Roy Kinnear?" And Roy was absolutely nothing like the bloke I'd imagined when I was writing it! But

Brian was a new director, and he'd obviously had this brainstorm idea and was actually aching to get on the phone to Roy Kinnear. And I thought that it probably wasn't a bad idea, because Roy was such a good character actor. It's usually safe, if somebody is a really classy actor, and I'm always in favour of giving things like that a try. So I didn't make a fuss, I just said: "Yeah, go on. Give him a ring, see if he'll do it." And later Brian rang back and said: "Oh, Roy Kinnear's agent says it's great, Roy would love to do a Blake's 7!"

KEVIN: Once you knew Roy Kinnear was playing Keiller, did you then change the way you wrote the character?

COLIN: No, no. I wouldn't have dreamed of changing it. Apart from the fact that Roy had made his reputation in comedy, in *That Was The Week That Was*, I'd seen him act on the stage quite a few times, and I just knew how good he was. He could turn himself into absolutely anything, and if he wanted to play a devious bastard, he would find a way of doing it. Which he did, with Keiller. He really worked out in the rehearsal room what to do, making you think about how the character was covering up for himself all the time. Roy was one of those guys who had the ability to let the thoughts of the character work in his own head. Keiller actually lived up there in his thoughts, they actually took place in his own mind. He really got into the part!

STEVE: Did you find that due to technical or budgetary constraints that you had to limit your ideas in your original script?

COLIN: Well, that problem doesn't really arise when you've got a script editor like Chris, who's been with the series for a long time, because he knows what's coming up. So at a very early stage in the script, he's telling you what you can and can't do. When he said that my first draft was a load of ****, what he was really saying was that there was stuff they just couldn't handle. For instance, there was a scene I'd written which was to have been the opening scene for 'Gold'. At the end of the episode, I'd written the explanation of how Servalan had set them up, with the final twist being that she'd set them up even more deviously than they'd thought, but that they had brought her this far, and I put that line in the computer's mouth. Chris had this word that he always used, that when you were stuck, or not exactly stuck, but you wanted to move the plot forward - you were completely at liberty to use a 'humgrommet' - you made up a technical scientific name, like when we turned the gold black.

NICOLA: Like a 'McGuffin'?

COLIN: It is, exactly that! The science is irrelevant, obviously, so you just invent some subatomic process by which it will happen, and put in an appropriate line.

KEVIN: Subneutronic overlap shift!

COLIN: Yes, yes! I thought of that on a train coming into Paddington Station! As I was opening the door of the carriage to get down out of the train, I sort of decided that the words would be SUBNEUTRONIC OVERLAP SHIFT!

NICOLA: I usually think of less polite words coming into Paddington Station!

COLIN: It was really just saying to the person who was queuing up in front of me: "Shift!" But on that sort of principle, I had to explain how the set-up was done, so cleverly-cleverly-cleverly, and I made the computer say that it was done by Multiple Psychological Profile Diagnosis - that's how he'd worked out exactly how we would know that you would think that you would think that you would think etc. And to back that up, I had written as a first scene a scene with an enormous thing like a chessboard with large - like chess pieces, but with the faces of the Blake's 7 people, and they were being moved as if by invisible hands. And this was the computer calculating that if somebody did this somebody else would do that, and they'd be interacting. And right at the very early stage Chris said: "It's a super visual idea, and it would look great as the first shot we see. But we haven't got any more model budget, we can't do it, and all it is really is a sort of illustration of what's going on. We don't really need to see it, because the story tells us that this is what happens." So that idea went at that stage.

JACKIE: What a shame - it does sound like a fabulous idea!

NICOLA: In fact, one of the T-shirts that were being sold at an American convention had exactly that design! Blake and the others as the heads on chess pieces. They must have been privy to insider information!

COLIN: Or just a common idea!

(MORE TEA... AND SCONES AND CREAM. COLIN: I'm going to be the sole remaining pig over this!)

JACKIE: Did you go out and watch the filming?

COLIN: Not the exterior location filming, because they just went off to this quarry down in Dorset! The BBC used that quarry in *Tenko*, they used it for that foreign legion thing they did - *Beau Geste*. They used it for every damn place under the sun! It's the BBC's favourite location!

After the filming, they came back to rehearse for the studio scenes. It's very bad for a writer to go to the early rehearsals, because it's tempting to keep putting your oar in. Basically, a director's only got a couple of days to work with these actors and he's got to see things his way. They don't want to have a writer there saying: "No, no, no, that's not what I meant!" In a three-week theatrical rehearsal you could possibly put up with a writer doing that, but when you've only got three days in a rehearsal room to get fifty minutes well rehearsed, while at the same time you're taking lots of time off to talk to your cameraman who's also saying, "We can do this, we can do that..." - the last thing you want is some writer standing around being an absolute pain in the bum! I suspect if writers go in saying: "This is the way I want it done." - they don't get to write too often, because they're too damn difficult to work with, at least on 'ongoing' series... So as a writer, you'll have produced a script that you've enjoyed working on, and then you let them get on with it and don't rock the boat too much.

I might have changed a line if I'd gone in towards the end of a rehearsal, and they had said: "We cannot make this scene work, can you change it?" And sometimes Chris would ring up and say, "Perhaps we could just swap this line around?" - little things like that, to make a scene flow a bit better. Or to help for completely practical reasons - for instance, if an actor's come in on this camera, and has to cross over to that one, and needs a line for that move. It would be a problem that the writer hadn't foreseen, because you weren't privy to the way it was going to be set up, how they were going to pace it or where the cameras would be. In the main, that's the script editor's job, that was Chris Boucher's job. But if the writer's there, then they will always ask him.

NICOLA: Was there much ad-libbing?

COLIN: Hardly any at all. I went to watch the producer's run, when they do the final rehearsal in the rehearsal room before the studio recording. It was a very, very nice rehearsal. Roy Kinnear was so enthusiastic! "What a super story," he kept saying, "I'm really enjoying this, haven't enjoyed myself like this for a long time!" He had that knack of making the people who worked around him feel like they're talented.

Brian Lighthill, the director, was funny. He looked like George Harrison in his Indian days. He gave an impression of guru-ishness and contemplation. I could never imagine Brian actually kicking actors up the bum and saying "Get moving!" It was as if he was meditating all the time. But he was full of quite good ideas.

The only thing I was really unhappy with in the end was all that business down in the warehouse. The initial break-in that went wrong. When I saw Brian at that rehearsal, he said to me: "Oh, the filming is fantastic, it's unbelievable, we've got some amazing film there!" But when I actually watched the early scenes they'd shot in the warehouse, I thought that it was very bitty, very inexperienced filming, because they hadn't got enough shots in to make all the points. The shots were very nice, but the scene wasn't covered enough, and it wasn't clear what was happening. I kept thinking, mmm, this isn't what I wrote, you know, it's very unclear how they're getting trapped. I mean, I knew because I'd written it - but I wasn't sure that anybody else could see how Avon and Soolin turned up at the spaceship, how they got there from the plant. All of which is deadily clear in the script, but obviously had been really, really pared down. I'd gone over backwards to be absolutely specific in the script as to what was happening and who would turn up where, but they hadn't followed that. Also, I felt that basically, one thing you need on a robbery, one of the things that makes a robbery exciting, is the fact that somebody else could turn up - you hear footsteps and everybody has to freeze... and you can hang this sort of stuff out for a hell of a long time, and people will stay absolutely gripped. Like a courtroom scene, it can take its natural pace, and everybody is absolutely going to stay with it. But they didn't do it like that.

It can happen, out filming on location - they're out there and it's cold, and they've got to get two more shots in before night falls, and if they've got a problem, somebody will say: "Well, we can do it this way," - and great, off they go. I think it takes a very experienced director to know just how much you do need. The end bit of filming down in the quarry I thought was alright, they'd managed to get that, but the bit in the warehouse I thought was very vague. Obviously, they'd just run out of filming time, or didn't get quite enough shots to do it. But tiny little things like that can suddenly make a huge difference.

KEVIN: Where was that scene actually shot?

COLIN: Haven't a clue!

NICOLA: Looked like it could have been just a studio shot.

JACKIE: No, not if it was done on film - it would have been on location, wouldn't it?

KEVIN: It was a location, you could tell - there were telephone booths, with the phones unscrewed temporarily and lots of stickers all over the place!

COLIN: They might have had the shots - I'm only guessing that that was the problem. The problem could also have been that to make it a bit clearer they would have needed to use another minute of film, but it was a case of either cutting down on that film and just leaving the thing as a hellishly messy thing that somehow goes wrong, or else cutting down on the episode later to get it all into 50 minutes. If that was the case, then we made the mistake at the script editing stage, you know, we didn't trim enough dialogue. I always tend to write more - it's easier to trim than to add things. If that's the reason, then we obviously didn't cut quite enough, and they had to lose some of the film.

JACKIE: Quite often that does happen at the film editing stage.

KEVIN: Worse than that was that were some continuity errors with Tarrant's jacket that keeps disappearing off his shoulders - and every time they cut back to him he's got it on, then he hasn't, then he has...

COLIN: I think that Brian had got back in control over what he was trying to do as soon as the space cruiser started going - aided as much as anything else by the simply super music they had on the Space Princess!

KEVIN: Yes, wonderful incidental music (HUMS A FEW BARS)

(PAUSE FOR TEA POURING, FLISS GETS DRIPPED ON)

COLIN: I thought that Brian did quite well with the opening, the exposition scene, where Keiller puts his proposition to them. It's quite a long scene, and I think he did that very well. I thought that within the limits of the set and all that, they did the actual robbery quite well. And I thought he did excellently well with the actors. For instance, the scene when Tarrant pretends to be drugged and that Dayna is ill. Steven Pacey acted that superbly well! He did a really, really smashing job. I thought they would probably mess up the actual getting across the little tube to the Scorpio, but it

struck me that he did that quite well, too - well, you know, I'd spent a lot of time on the script. They obviously had to get out quite quickly, because they were going to go into a vacuum. And the idea of the ruthlessness of the actual guards who then find themselves shut out... I had to be a bit careful there, because Chris went away and had a little consult, scientifically, and found out what would have happened immediately a vacuum came. Avon would have been okay, because he had his little teleport machine - but immediately a vacuum came, that guard would have literally exploded - (GRAPHIC NOISE ILLUSTRATING PERSON EXPLODING!)

KEVIN: Yeah, all the vessels in the skin go... wouldn't be a very pretty sight!

COLIN: Well, Chris didn't feel they were actually up to putting that in!

NICOLA: They did do it in one of the episodes, though.

STEVE: In 'Hostage'.

COLIN: Anyway, after that they went to this little planet, and the director did that scene rather well. And the second bit of filming, in the quarry - when Servalan turns up - I felt Brian was in control of it then, I felt that the film was the right length. And the lovely shot he put in, of Servalan's boots - no messing around, you're one step in advance of the characters, then. You had one more bit of information than they did. I think, when Brian said to me at the rehearsal that he had some lovely film, that he must have been thinking of that quarry stuff.

They did have to cut the last scene a fair bit because of time, but again I felt he'd done that very well, with Avon chucking the useless bits of money up in the air. And I mean, it's very old hat that Avon should suddenly laugh, but even so, he did it very nicely, with perfect timing and so on. It did say, you know, 'What an enemy, it was worth it, next time I get her, I'll...' (DIRTY LAUGH)

FLISS: When you were writing it, was there any conscious awareness of the episode's place in the development of the series? There was a certain idea that Avon was gradually cracking up throughout the 4th series. Did you feel conscious of that at all? Particularly with his laugh at the end.

COLIN: Nope! No, because I didn't know where my episode was going to go. It could have been third, fourth, fifth...

NICOLA: So the laugh was just the idea that if you're going to get beaten, you might as well get beaten by a damn good adversary.

COLIN: Yeah, yeah. And also - that they'll live to fight another day.

KEVIN: Live to lose another day! They didn't do much winning in the fourth series.

NICOLA: Why did you make them lose as opposed to getting away with it?

COLIN: Oh, well, that's just while I was dreaming up the story. I was starting to see twists, one after another. And it seemed to me that the logical end of the twist was that they were going to lose. It would be an exceedingly devious plan by Servalan. I suppose if I'd managed to think of yet an even more devious twist, so that Avon could have said 'Aha!' I would have put it in, but at that point I was running out of twists! That was about it, that was as far as I could see that one going.

NICOLA: Did you have any time limitations when you were writing?

COLIN: No. They wanted the first draft by January, and then after that they didn't really care. They didn't need a second draft until May. But I think I gave it to Chris in April.

JACKIE: Did they have all the scripts in before they started shooting?

COLIN: Oh yeah, most series will do this.

JACKIE: Not at Granada - they write them on location!

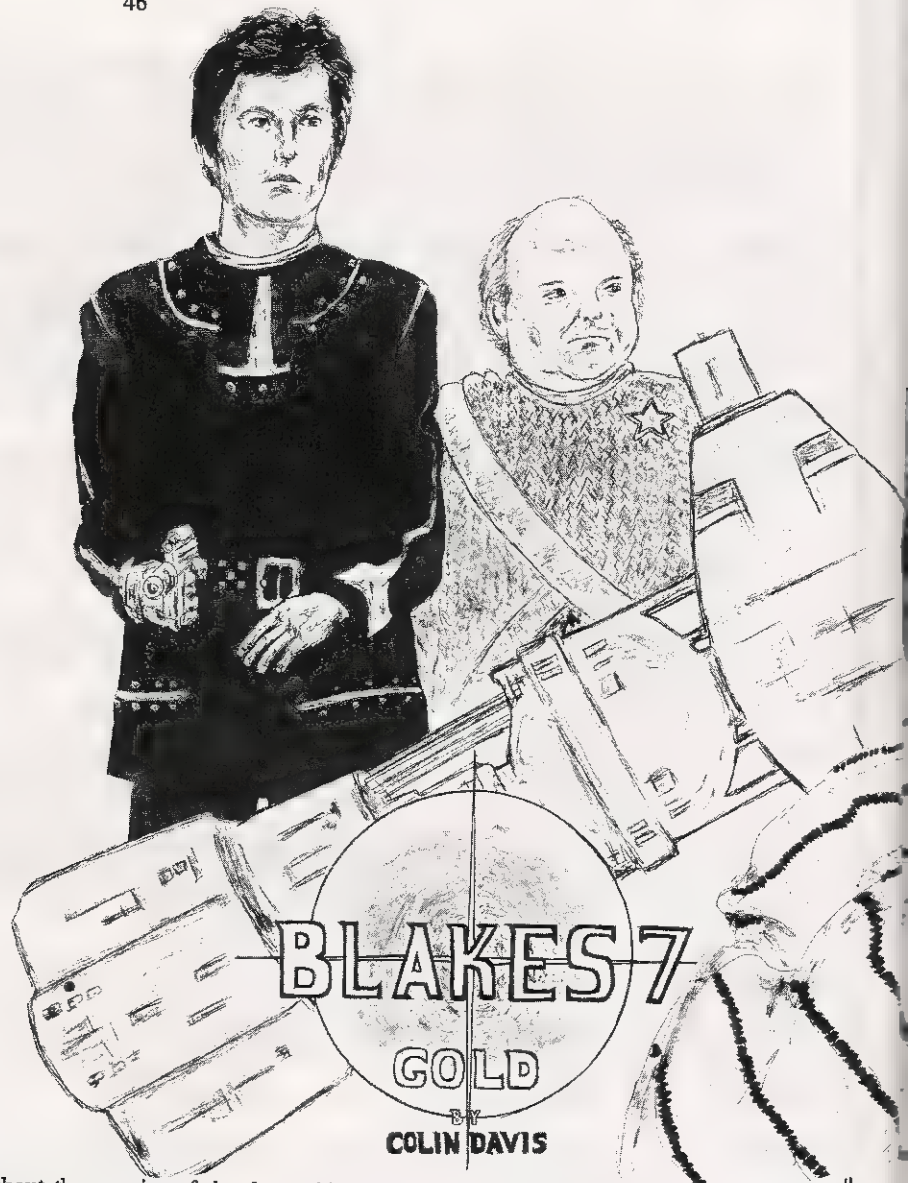
COLIN: Yeah, that's true. I noticed that, yes. They work very, very tightly there. That can be absolutely stunning, you can get absolutely tremendous results, but you can also actually nosedive horrifically if you do that.

FLISS: Would you have liked to do more episodes of Blake's 7?

COLIN: Yeah, I would, if it had gone on. Especially as I got on very well with Chris. I found I could work very easily with him. He was very annoyed that he wasn't going to be able to do another series of Blake's 7 and go back to the same crew of script writers. He was very nice, actually. Immediately afterwards, he got me some work on *Triangle* - a disastrous series!

NICOLA: Considering they had reasonably good actors in *Triangle*, it was not very well done!

COLIN: They do it like all these things - what happens is that somebody makes the storyline up, and what you're given as a writer is a storyline, which is very, very detailed. Everything, the precise words that people say, is written down for you, and you have no control over it as a writer whatsoever. And all you have to do is get lucky and land up with characters which you know exactly what they're going to say, exactly where the scene begins and where the scene finishes. You could get a computer to do it! Unfortunately it was so bad we got no repeat fees or anything. I think it got zero overseas sales!



NICOLA: I think it sank!

COLIN: Why on earth did they go and make about three series of the damn thing? Loony - no one in the world ever bought the damn series. I wish that they had - they didn't pay me!

NICOLA: You've written a lot of radio. Do you prefer that medium?

COLIN: Well, no, not necessarily - actually I didn't intend to be a writer at all!

JACKIE: Aha! What did you intend to be?

COLIN: Originally, one of the first jobs I did was teaching Drama down at Exmouth, at the college. Then I went round the fringe theatre companies in London, and after that I went and taught drama up in Nottingham, a little mini acting school. What I actually did want to be was a freelance stage director, directing freelance productions.

I got myself booked up for six months work directing in London, and went down to live in Kent, which was the cheapest place you could live near London. The Surrey side is all very expensive, but Kent is really very nice, within half-an-hour commute up the line, and it was dirt cheap. So I went and lived there, in one of those purpose-built new villages, you know, Green Belt villages. This was in the mid-seventies, and it was really a lovely place, nice and cheap and scenic and everything.

And the brilliant thing was that they had a rugby club, on big open fields just beyond my house. I'd always played rugby when I was a kid, though I hadn't played it since I'd been at college. But I went over to the club, bought a few beers, and they invited me to join their team. They said: "We're only just starting out, and if you've already played rugby it doesn't matter that you're thirty-plus! All we've got is some thirty-plus and some sixteen year old kids." So we all played rugby, and it was great! I got myself really fit again, really was enjoying it. And it was a lovely, hard ground summer. There were two great summers - '75 and '76. '76 was the really well-known dry summer, but in '75 - it was still snowing at the end of May, and yet suddenly from the middle of June there were two or three months of absolutely terrific weather. And it was that summer.

The first game we played was against the marines down at Chatham. Surprisingly, although they were exceedingly strong, fit guys, in rugby terms they were unfit! It was the start of the season for them, too, and they were still a bit knackered. I was playing wing three-quarter and it - it shouldn't have happened. There was a forward who was just too knackered to get back where he should have been. The ball was passed out to me, I went whizzing by, and he was just standing there, panting. And he stuck a hand out, grabbed the corner of my shirt, and the studs on my boot

Illustration by Miles Davies



caught in the hard ground. That's all it was - not a tackle or anything rough or nasty - he just caught my shirt. And I was shifting a bit, and just went flying - PSHOOOOW! And all my work, all my six months work, went up in smoke just like that. I can remember flying through the air, seeing my ankle at right angles to my leg. And everything slows down, and you think to yourself, 'This is going to hurt! When I land on this, it's really going to hurt!' and then - BANG - AAARGH! So I spent the next month in Gillingham Hospital, and certainly not directing plays...

I became a writer, because with only one leg working, it was something I thought I could still do. I rang up people I knew around the BBC, the World Service, Schools Radio, etc. and said: "Can I do some writing for you?" I needed a living, you see, I'd given up drama, and there was no other way of doing it. So I became a writer completely by accident, without any other sort of commitment. Not like the people who do it in garrets and work at it and, you know, produce the great work. I would do any project, whatever anyone wanted. Anybody who would actually put up money in advance - I took it, just to keep going.

And it was easier to get into radio than telly. It's not very easy to walk into a telly company and say: "I'm a writer - at least I think I am - how about me working for you?" That's not usually the way in for people who have commitment - they write things, actually get a name for what they've written, and then get asked to write for a programme. But as a jobbing writer, somebody who'll write absolutely anything anybody wants - you don't stand much chance just knocking on the telly companies' door, but you do stand a fair chance of getting work like that in radio. So that's why I worked a lot in radio - sheer practical work!

There are a lot of radio programmes that need writers. Particular sorts of programmes, where the producers have already thought out what they're going to be, and they just need somebody to write them. It's a bit soul-destroying in a way, because every time you work with a new producer you've got a new person with a certain set of ideas of their own. I had about three or four years of just going around listening to other people's ideas.

NICOLA:

And it's not your work either. Especially adaptations and things.

COLIN:

Adaptations are a slightly different cup of tea. They're all right, because you've got a lot of freedom on adaptations. People who've never adapted anything think that it's the easy option in writing, and it's not. Adapting is quite good fun, but it's not easy.

In my early days, when I was just casting around for money, I did a lot of a something called Sixty-Minute Theatre - radio theatre, on the BBC World Service, where basically they take a play by a well-known playwright and make a sixty-minute radio version of it. For years I've been churning out three-hour plays in sixty minutes. I must have done

a couple of hundred of these damn things! When I first did them, I was watching every word I was cutting, but eventually I got amazingly cavalier. Obviously, you've got no soul in it, there is nothing of yours in there. You're just a technician on a team, really, trying to make as good a show as you possibly can. And you think to yourself, 'For two days work, this is a good rate per hour. But if I take four days, then it's a very poor rate per hour!' So I would say to myself very quickly: 'This is a two-day job,' and go FWSHT, FWSHT, FWSHT (GESTURES TO INDICATE PEN SLASHING THROUGH SCRIPT), and slice it! Of course, it's much easier to cut other people's writing than your own - even very well-known, famous writers! You can see in a flash, well that's all padding, bang-bang, there's six pages gone. Totally spurious character, we'll cut everything he says for a start! But all these things that are easily discarded when they're somebody else's are quite precious when they're your own!

I actually found that most middle-of-the-road plays, written at two and a half hours, are infinitely better at sixty minutes! Because the writer has done what I'm talking about, he's said that every word of his is precious, and has left nothing out. Most of those plays work much more strongly slashed into a tight sixty minutes. But then beyond that, you've got the absolutely dreadful plays, and the absolutely brilliant ones - and they're both impossible to cut! They once sent me a play by some writer, and it was the worst play I had ever read! And the acid test was that it was just totally irrelevant which bits I cut! I could literally shut my eyes and go FWSSSHT (BLIND SLASHING GESTURE) right the way through it, and when I'd put the pencil through enough stuff, I could join the pieces up together and end up with a play with as much validity as the one I started off with! There was nothing that was important or unimportant in this play, it was just people saying things from start to finish. I wrote the producer a note two days later, saying: "This cannot be done!" And the producer wrote back and said: "I know, it's been dumped!" That's one extreme. And at the other extreme are the really good plays, which are absolute hell to cut! When you're dealing with a real craftsman, their work completely resists cutting down to sixty minutes. The better the playwright, the more I... (HEAD IN HANDS, GROAN). If it was a middle-of-the-road name, a good, competent writer, you know that's a nice two days job at quite a good rate per hour. But Sheridan or Shaw or someone like that - it's very hard to throw their stuff away because everything they write is good!

JACKIE: Do you find the same when you're adapting books?

NICOLA: With something like *London Belongs to Me*, certainly I would have thought that was quite difficult.

COLIN: Mmm... it's not really quite the same, because books are not designed the same way as plays. For instance, you can get something out of even an enormous book like *London Belongs to Me*, though you know before you start that you'll be throwing three quarters of it away. You look for the heart of what the book is about. In this case, it was people's lives changed by the war. And more than anything else, about people who've lost a son in the war. There's an incredibly moving line at the end, when the chap is sitting there back at his job, the war's all over, and he looks at a picture of his son and says: "You should have been here, Ted, not me." That's so moving, and you know that core things like that have just got to be in. After that, you look at how much of the rest of the stuff you can save. But obviously if something has actually got you there - ungl! - that's got to go in!

I actually proposed *London Belongs to Me* because I scented some money in it! It's 600 pages long, and I thought I could get thirteen episodes out of a book that length! I don't know if any of you know it, but it's an absolutely super book, it's outstandingly good. Anyway, this producer at the BBC rang me up and said: "Yes, we'll do it, and I want it adapted to be done in sixty minutes!" (INCREDULOUS LAUGH) He said: "There can't be any problem with that, I've seen the film and that was done in an hour and a half!" And the thing is, he'd never read the book. He knew that Ealing had done a film, so he presumed that if a film could do it in an hour and a half, and radio packs more in, you could do it on the radio in an hour! He had no clue at all. Eventually when he actually took it to a meeting, he was told not to be so stupid, and that he needed three hours - you know, four forty-five minute episodes. He thought I'd be thrilled with that - and I suppose I was, having been told before that it was sixty minutes or nothing! Anyway, not long after that this guy left the BBC.

Then a woman came on, whose name was Enyd Williams, who was one of the editors on BBC radio drama. And Enyd was so nice, and so good, we actually got on with the project very quickly. The whole thing was done in about three weeks! Enyd was a very combative character. We got on a crossed line the first time she called me at home. A chap came on and was saying (GRUFF OLD BUFFER VOICE) he was on the line, and he was on the line before we were on the line, and no way was he going to get off. And I'm really quite a Meltis Newberry Fruit type on that, you know, I'll cave in easily. But Enyd - my God, did she go for the jugular! And within about three seconds, he was off! Then sweet as honey she was again - "Let's think about this, yes I think we can do that..." Fine, bingo - three weeks later we were in the studio!

But adaptations aren't easy. You do have to get to the heart of what the book is about.

JACKIE: And do it all in dialogue.

COLIN: Yeah.

JACKIE: Do you write in the sound effects in the script?

COLIN: On radio you do, yeah. You write in every effect that you want to hear. If you don't put them in, it's no good saying afterwards: "Well, of course there should be a lorry going past there," because they will say: "Well, it's not down here in the script, it don't say nothing about a lorry here!"

JACKIE: So do you work with the BBC sound effects catalogue to hand?

COLIN: No, no. You just say what you want to hear, and they'll find some way of doing it. There's no sound effect they can't do - if they haven't got it they'll create it. To make a sound is easy.

JACKIE: Do you do the same for television as well?

COLIN: Well, for telly there's only certain things you can write. For instance, nobody's really interested in you putting in camera angles. You get all these books that advise you about writing for telly - you know, writing manuals which tell you about medium close ups and long shots etc. And a lot of people will pick up a manual or go to some writing school and then write scripts with camera angles - and these things are totally ignored! So why bother putting them in?

JACKIE: But if it's vital to the plot, if it's a close-up of somebody's hands and not their face, for instance?

COLIN: Well, anything absolutely vital that you need to see, you put in the script: *'We see the hands and then the enquiring face...'* And it always helps if you have a point-of-view shot - you know, *'We see Avon's point of view'*. That sort of thing is very important. It still doesn't commit the director to a particular way of doing it, but he knows what you're thinking, and it doesn't clutter him in any way. But if you start putting in the camera angles - it just makes hard work, you know. The secretaries have to go through the script crossing them out! You can actually see it in the different layouts of telly scripts and radio scripts. With radio scripts you'll put in the character's name, leave a space, and then most of the page will be taken up with the dialogue. With a telly script, the character name and the line are all written in a column down one half of the page, so that at any time, even before they write the camera scripts, the directors can start jotting down their thoughts down in the space beside the column. But those things really only seem important when you're just setting out to write for telly or radio. It's not beyond the wit of any writer to actually look at a script, see how it's laid out and to do the same.

JACKIE: What about timing? If you're asked to write a half-hour script, how do you know what constitutes half an hour? Do you read it aloud and time it? Do you go by speech being three words per second?

COLIN: I don't think like that, no. Originally, what I used to do was write things and then test them back with a stopwatch, but now radio-wise, I usually just look at the number of pages, and know basically how long it will take. Once you've done it so many times, you just know.

Most things when I write them, I scribble. Sometimes I use the word processor - I've got a little program called 'Brainstorm', which is very easy to use to juggle ideas around. But as like as not, I still use a paper and pencil, for the simple reason that I don't like staring at those screens any longer than I've got to. I feel like I'm being fried! So I scribble out on a piece of paper what's going to happen in this half an hour or fifty minutes, whatever, and then roughly the time it's going to take. For instance, if I've put down a scene in a shop, where the character gets arrested, I'll write in the margin the rough number of minutes I think it's going to take to establish that, and so on. Then, if I've got a sixty-minute programme and I tot up all those numbers in the margin and it comes to sixty-five, it doesn't bother me, I go ahead and start writing it. But if it comes to ninety-three, then I've really got to rethink it! You know in advance that you're on a loser!

But even once I've decided that I've got an hour's worth of stuff, I sometimes find that it doesn't take many miscalculations to go wrong. I can start typing a couple of pages and suddenly think, 'Oh my God, that's supposed to be three minutes worth, and I've got seven pages here, and I know for a start that that's certainly more than three minutes!' And if after you've cut all you can, there's still more than three minutes, then you know that something's obviously way-off and you have to adjust it. You've got to look at it and say, do I want to establish the scene at that length, is it that important to the plot? Because if I do, I'm definitely going to have to lose something else - are there other things that I can lose? If I can't lose anything else, am I really stuck with something that won't cut? Have I sold an idea at thirty minutes when it really is a 45-minute idea? In which case it needs a radical rethink. You can clearly see pretty soon how things are going to turn out, and you've somehow got to be ruthless with your stuff. As I said, it's much easier to cut other people's writing than your own!

Telly can be even more tricky, because sometimes people suggest cuts for the wrong reasons. I suppose a really good writer can see the problems coming and somehow control it, but I can't as yet fully handle it. People may come in and make suggestions for cuts and I'll go along with them, but then I'll find at the end that the wrong things have been used as a judge for what should stay or go out. Sometimes, if a director has got some good shots he'll use them - (DIRECTOR-TYPE VOICE) "Got some lovely stuff here" - because even though they don't actually need all those shots, they don't want to throw them away. And then they'll cut the piece you've written absolutely ruthlessly, because they're overrunning. I suppose the only thing to do is somehow be absolutely precise and ruthless and accurate in anything that you write for telly. I still find that incredibly hard.

NICOLA: It must be terrible when you've slaved away on a few pages and they say: "Well, we don't want this, we don't want that," and you're left with a couple of paragraphs or something.

COLIN: Yeah, but you see, often I'm tempted to believe them. If the guy says: "This is a flat bit, we don't need all that." - I'll think, 'Well, yeah, if it gave him that impression, and it's not what I intended, then I've got to find out why it gave him that impression.' I may not want to actually do it his way, but at least I'd want to know why my thing affected him in that way. If you go to somebody you respect - like Gareth Morgan, at Granada - he said a few things like that about my *Dramarama*. Some of the scenes had a certain effect on him that I didn't intend, and I asked why. And that can actually be quite creative. But you never know at the start whether you're getting somebody you should be respecting or whether they're just reacting to ideas in their own heads, and you just haven't come up with what they thought. You can find yourself spending time thinking, 'Why do I have this effect on him?' while the truth is you don't, he just had fixed ideas in his head to start with. So what's the answer really? You can't only work with people you admire, because everything's so fluid and changeable. You'd never meet and work with new people if you did that. Perhaps you just need to keep refining your skill about picking up and testing people's reactions and seeing whether you believe them or not. It's an odd mix between trusting yourself, which you've got to do anyway, and listening to other people.

NICOLA:

Presumably also when you write a play, like the one you did called *Thin Boy*. How did you go about that?

COLIN:

Thin Boy is actually the most amazing true-life story that ever took place! '*Thin Boy*' was the name they gave to the Hiroshima bomb. Back in '77, I was originally asked by Schools Radio, to do a little series for school kids about Hiroshima. And the first thing you find when you start doing some reading is just - well, like any war atrocity - how horrible it is, you know. And basically the material you've got is just the story of people being burned alive, which is not very pleasant. And I mean, this is for 16-year old kids. It's the most hideous thing that can happen and if you just write it down, people will switch off, because they just can't bear this amount of horror. So I was delving around and I came across this story of a chap called the Hiroshima Pilot. He was a chap who at became a great name after the war, in the '50s - the Hiroshima Pilot, The Man Who Bombed Hiroshima - who changed to being a great campaigner for peace.

NICOLA:

Was that Tibbetts?

COLIN:

No, this guy was called Eatherly. The story that went out was that he had bombed Hiroshima, and then gone mad. In fact, he had been going mad for some time, and he cracked up completely. When they actually caught up with him, he'd been robbing post offices all over Texas! He was examined by a doctor, who said in court that his condition was a very advanced form of schizophrenia caused by Hiroshima. And this was his defence: that he had come back from the war, and had been feted as a hero for what he'd done, when in fact he'd committed the biggest crime against humanity that there had ever been. And in his bones he knew that he shouldn't be feted, he should be punished, but all he got was praise. The doctor said that he'd studied him in great detail, and was absolutely convinced that all this man's career of wrong-doing and crime was a deliberate psychological way of getting for himself the punishment that he thought he needed for what he'd done to Hiroshima. And the court declared that he was not guilty by reason of insanity. Eatherly then became a huge cause celebre, because in lots of ways he was perfectly sane, able to speak his piece. The story crossed the Atlantic in a big way; John Wayne wrote a poem in the Listener, Bertrand Russell said: "Who is sane? This man who cracked up because of Hiroshima, or the rest of us who can actually stay sane in a world where people can do this to other people?" Anyway, if you can imagine in right-wing America, if you get a figure like this pilot campaigning for peace and speaking out for the early CND, then the anti-CND industry goes into top gear! They've got to find a way to discredit him, to blacken this guy's name. So the anti-CND industry investigated this guy, and what they discovered was that he was the ultimate 22-carat fraud! That he hadn't flown the plane that bombed Hiroshima at all, it was the chap called Tibbetts who'd been that pilot! Eatherly flew the weather plane!

He was a wild guy, an absolute nutcase. But can you imagine, out in the Pacific War, he was a hero. Eatherly was reputed in training to have saved a B-29 when the reversible prop locks went out of it. Everybody said that no pilot could land the plane in that condition, but he did - on the spur of the moment, with about three seconds to think, he instinctively did the one thing that could save it. And he'd not been trained for it, had no idea about it, he just instinctively put the plane into a steep nose-dive and then pulled out. In fact, what he actually did was take a B-29 full of his crew and point them straight at the ground! But it worked. The people on the ground said that they'd given up those twelve lives, that they were sure they were goners. And everybody on the plane came out wet - but this guy just walked off the plane - he was cool, man! He could bluff at poker, and he would win poker hands time and time again. He won so much money that they used to say that the best way to win the war against Japan was to send this guy to play poker with them!

On the day of Hiroshima, they were all under instructions to go straight home, but Eatherly had been furious that he wasn't flying the bomber, because he was the best pilot. So he decided against orders that he'd stay up in the weather plane and watch the bang - this is the guy who supposedly cracked up with the horror of it - he wanted to stay up in the weather plane and watch it go off! And the only reason they didn't stay and watch, was a quick calculation that they'd miss their seats at the poker game! The bang was taking too long, so they decided to go home! And after all that he got thrown out of the air force because obviously that's the sort of pilot who's brilliant in war time, but not when they're just flying planes for the simple purpose of just getting from A to B. You actually want somebody reliable for that!

Colin Davis - taken by Jackie Ophir



After that he went gun-running. He had a long, long history of crime in Texas where they're all nutty as fruitcakes anyway! Then he also claimed that he'd done the Bikini bomb-drop and Nagasaki, which he hadn't. And eventually he was totally exposed as a fraud.

Anyway, this struck me as being the perfect play, the perfect way to make 16-year old kids think about Hiroshima. This guy was a complete fraud, he was a liar and a cheat, but yet he said: "I'm deeply ashamed of Hiroshima." And you have to ask yourself, is a moral case exploded because you can prove that the guy who makes it is a cheat? It forces you to think about it. So I'd written that as a twenty-minute play, and then somebody else in the theatre suggested that I turn it into a full-scale theatre play. I touted it around the London fringe, trying to set it up. I needed to raise about £100,000 to put it on - we were touting around for big, big money. We wanted to fly real model planes! But I gave up, because running the fringe theatre was hard work. But this very ambitious guy went to work for the BBC and the first production he got lined up for the radio is *Thin Boy!* The thing is, if it ever returned to the fringe, now, it might be a bit late because Roland Joffe is just about to bring out his film about American bomb squads, at the end of the last war. So I'll have to see how it goes.

NICOLA: What are you working on at the moment?

COLIN: Hopefully, I'm doing a series based on the Ghost Story I did for *Dramarama*. Granada have put it forward for their flexipool. In *Dramarama* the cadets were all boys, but now the combined cadet forces have girls in as well, and sick-making they are best at everything!

JACKIE: Of course!

COLIN: You've got ideal drama there, you know. And then there's a kids' jokes series I'm working on. But no television company can make decisions nowadays. You have to go to all these flexipools to get anything sorted out. But this kids' jokes series, provided it can go ahead, should be a gold mine for me! Sixty-odd episodes.

(FINAL DRAINING OF TEA-POT, AS THE WAITRESSES START TO PUT CHAIRS ON THE TABLES)

Well, anyway, I didn't have all that much to tell you about Blake's Seven, did I?!

PAUL DARROW IN 'MAKING NEWS' (THAMES TV) reviewed by Nicola B

⤴ (Laser printer again... sorry...) (It didn't do that on the disk!)

→ Best

'*Making News*' started life as one pilot among several in a series under the overall title 'Storyboard'. It was deemed successful enough for a series in its own right, and six further episodes followed. To say that '*Making News*' was eagerly awaited by B7 fans would have been an understatement. Alas, after the pilot, the series did not live up to expectations. I was rather dissatisfied with the quality of the storylines the cast had to work with. The pilot, though somewhat muddled, because it wanted to fit so much in, was reasonable, although the third-rate pastiche of the '*Third Man*' galled my moviephile sensibilities. Still, it got off to a good start, as, just after the credits, Paul Darrow entered, looking splendid in a beautiful camel coat. He carried a box of strawberries, and as he went up the escalator someone took one and was rewarded with a very Avonish glare!

He had some nice exchanges and lines in the first few scenes: George: (to female anchor) No, no, no, my dear, it's major political. Producer: George always does major political. And in an imperious tone when workmen were making a noise: 'I am rehearsing.' Reading from the autocue 'our Brussels correspondent reports from Brussels... well, he's not going to report from Cardiff, is he?!'

Paul plays George Parnell, a self-assured newsreader who thinks he's the cat's whiskers. Fortunately, he can do his job well, which is lucky for him as the new owner wants to get rid of him. The owner, played by the charismatic Jack Klaff, is out to make The News Channel a razzle-dazzle affair, much to the editor's disgust. George is on the hit list. The editor sticks up for him by giving him a back-handed compliment: "George is a pain in the bum, but he's a pro." Other characters introduced were Carrie Vernon, a tough Kate Adie like reporter, with her comedy double-act of camera and sound men. Sam Courtney, an angst-ridden conscience reporter; Jill Wickham, female anchor who's after George's job and Lucy Trent, who got into the newsroom via the owner's favours. There's also Pelham, who drinks, and was once a good reporter. There were some good one-liners all round, and the characters were sketched out well; to be fleshed out in the series.

When the series came, there had been some major cast changes. Gone was Jack Klaff, replaced by Clive Arrindell (normally a good actor) who played the owner as a bore and brought no colour to the part. Gone was Jeremy Nicholas who played Pelham (a change for the better, this) - he was replaced with the wonderfully hang-dog Gawn Grainger. And although not gone, but her character diminished, the sharp, brilliant actress, Nichola McCaulliffe. Susan Kyd as Jill was also replaced, like for like. Anita Markham, another reporter, appeared, sharing the comedy act of the technical crew.

The stories that the intrepid reporters covered varied from prison riots, a suspected killer hiding in Australia, and what the PM said in Downing Street. An interesting storyline was one that dealt with refugees from Roumania, which had to be reshot as history overtook fiction. The hackneyed line: 'Hold the front page!' was not uttered, but one felt it wasn't far beneath the surface. The characters, so carefully sketched in the pilot, became cardboard caricatures of the brave reporter, tough boss and harassed editor. Any home life that had been previously mentioned was forgotten, and you rarely saw glimpses of the character's lives outside the station. Paul's character was one that was least altered and he gave good, consistent performances. The episode that featured his contract renewal was one of the better ones. But his appearances, well delivered acerbic comments and bon mots were like an English sunny day; longed for, too quickly gone, and not enough!

Thames have cancelled the show, but if ever there were to be another series, the producers would do well to look at Studio 5B, an American series in a similar vein. This was slick, well scripted and held the interest. With such talented actors in '*Making News*', it deserves to be as good.

HORIZON MERCHANDISE

ZINES

NEW: HORIZON 14 is out. Due to a typesetting glitch, one page has been printed twice and one page missed out. Anyone wanting a copy of The Missing Page, please send an SAE to either Jackie Ophir or Ann Steele and it will be sent. Our apologies for this. **THE HORIZON TECHNICAL MANUAL PART 2 IS OUT** (and very impressive - and it tells you where the toilets are on the Liberator!!) The long awaited professional reprint of **THE EPIC** (prepare yourselves for a shock!!) **IS READY** - no, really, I have one in front of me right now! Seriously, this is a limited print run of 250 and we've already sold 100 of them. It's on A4 format, glossy art paper (like the newsletters), comb bound and a VERY nice cover. Order NOW. Prof. reprint of the combined Horizons 1 & 8 had a little setback, but is almost done - just have to correct the proof-reading, print out again and off to the printers. Shouldn't be more than a year or two!! Best of Spacefall 2 (combining Port in a Storm and one other story) isn't done yet - we'll let you know!

HORIZON 14 CONTAINS: 'There was a time when...' by Robin Atkins: a moving and unusual Avon/parallel universe story. 'Conflict' by Kevin Davies: Series 2 Tarrant story! Tarrant is a Federation Space Captain. His mission... destroy the Liberator! 'Against My Ruins' by Gill Marsden: Travis, by the woman who loved him. 'On the Fifth Day' by Helen Parkinson: Federation Interrogators waiting for Shriner. 'Heavy' a B7/Young Ones crossover by Val Leibson. 'Anselm' by Margaret Scroggs: a pre-GP Blake story. 'A Malign Influence' by Helen Parkinson: what really happened to Servalan, and the Sarcophagus alien, and Avon on Gauda Prime. 'Rehearsal' by Jackie Ophir. A tete-a-tete between Blake and Avon on the Liberator. Plus some brilliant artwork by Fliss Davies, Marianne Plumridge, Tim Pieraccini, Kathryn Andersen and Jo Jobson. £2.20 plus postage as detailed below. 101 pages, typeset A5 booklet.

THE HORIZON BLAKE'S SEVEN TECHNICAL MANUAL - PART TWO - is the definitive visual guide to the B7 Universe. It is being produced in several instalments, with this being the second. (Part One includes an attractive folder.) The complete Technical Manual will be an invaluable guide for all fans - it will enable modellers to make replicas of ships and props that TRULY match the originals. It will enable writers to describe situations knowing them to be accurate to the series. The Manual is divided into four sections: 1 - The Liberator; 2 - Scorpio and Xenon Base; 3 - The Federation; 4 - Non Federation. Part One contains a selection of drawings from all four sections; the exterior plans for the Liberator, a Pursuit Ship, Federation Supreme Command HQ and the Spaceworld Patrol Ship. Also included are the plans for the Liberator teleport bracelet and gun, the Scorpio gun, Federation blaster and pistol. **Part Two** concentrates on the interior of the Liberator, and also exteriors of Scorpio, Scorpio hand-guns, Federation Pursuit Ships, transport ships, convic ship and troop ship. There are also detailed notes relevant to the drawings in both Parts One and Two. The exact size of the complete Manual has not yet been decided - it all depends on how much interest exists in the project, but initial reaction has been very encouraging. A lot of work is involved in the research and drawing. Please let us know if there is anything you would particularly like to see included, and your reactions to Parts One and Two. Cost of Part One - £4.50 plus postage as detailed below. Cost of Part Two - £4.00 plus postage.

The following zines are in stock now (and will remain so) HORIZON 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14; STRANGERS AMONG US; THE WEB; THE EPIC, THE HORIZON INTERVIEWS, THE TECHNICAL MANUAL PART ONE and TWO. All are A5 professionally printed booklets (except the Technical Manual and The Epic - which are A4 size) All other back issues will be back in print as soon as we can manage it, some in a combined form; ie. HORIZON 1 + 8; HORIZON 3 + 4 and HORIZON 2 + 5. Also planned is a reprint of 'Best of Alternative Seven' - our adult (non slash) series.

BACK COPIES OF HORIZON NEWSLETTERS - I'm afraid we're COMPLETELY out of all back copies of everything EXCEPT for a large number of NLs 18, 19, 21, 22 & 23 and a very few of NLs 12 & 20.

PRICES:

HORIZON - the official Club Zine - general B7 stories: No. 6, No. 11, No. 12, No. 13 & No. 14 - £2.20 + 40p p&p each; Nos. 7, 9 & 10 - £2.00 + 40p p&p each; No. 1+8 (2 zines in one) - £3.00 + 50p p&p. Nos. 2,3,4,5, currently out of print.

STRANGERS AMONG US - 76 page B7/Star Trek single story zine. The Enterprise shuttle and a Romulan ship are thrown through a space warp. They find themselves helpless in Blake's universe. Now an A5 booklet with new interior artwork by Tim Pieraccini. £2.00 + 30p p&p

THE HORIZON INTERVIEWS - 135 pages of ALL the interviews Horizon ever did, which appeared in early N/Ls: Jacqueline Pearce, Steven Pacey, Lorna Heilbron, Josette Simon, Jan Chappell, Geoffrey Burridge, Michael Keating, Peter Tuddenham, Glynis Barber, Mat Irvine, Brian Croucher, Sheelagh Wells, Paul Darrow, Sally Knyvette - in depth interviews around 9 pages each carried out between summer 1980 and summer 1985. Reprinted professionally as an A5 booklet, with new artwork by Tim Pieraccini and a BEAUTIFUL photo collage cover. This is A MUST for all new members, and indeed even for those who had all the relevant NLs who would like to see all the interviews 'under one cover'. £3.50 + 50p p&p (UK).

THE HORIZON B7 TECHNICAL MANUAL - PARTS ONE AND TWO - The definitive B7 technical manual with detailed drawings/plans/scale of Liberator, other craft, weaponry, etc. Part One includes your Starter Folder, to which you will be able to add further inserts. £4.50 + 45p p&p (UK). Part Two costs £4.00 + 45p p&p (UK).

BACK NEWSLETTERS - Nos. 12, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 & 23 only. Cost £1.50 + 60p p&p each.

THE EPIC - the very first Epic Length B7 one-story zine, first printed in 1980-ish. This has always been available in VERY limited supply, but Horizon have finally managed to get a prof. printing (with plenty of excellent artwork) done with new exotic Laser Printing, as an A4 zine. The story is set in late Series 1 and introduces a race called The Phoenix to the B7 universe. There is Romance, Adventure, Tragedy, Drama, Intrigue, and Humour (the infamous Nude Bathing Scene for one!) and insights into Avon's past life... (nothing like 'A Terrible Aspect' but it was written in 1978!)

Price - £4.00 + £1 p&p (UK)

THE WEB - 103 pages, A5 prof. printed booklet. This is not an 'official' Horizon zine, but produced by your Club Sec. Diane Gies, and available from her direct, but also from Ann Steele if ordering other Horizon zines. Contents: 'These Our Actors' by Sharon Eckman. Set at the end of Series 3, before 'Terminal' it particularly features Cally, Avon and the mystical Alayn - has Avon finally met his match on this mysterious planet peopled by a dwindling band of dedicated Actors? 'The Alternative Rescue' story conceived by Diane Gies, and written by Jackie Ophir describes what might have happened to the surviving crew after 'Terminal' if Dorian hadn't come along. Told from Vila's viewpoint, from the events immediately following 'Terminal'. Also some terrific artwork. Cost is £2.25 + 50p p & p (UK).

Fuller details (ie. story descriptions) of all our zines are available on the ZINE LIST (available from Ann Steele or Jackie Ophir) for an SAE or SASE & 2 IRCs (or \$1 bill). Jackie has finally updated this - so it should be ready and waiting!!

The above prices are for UK only. Overseas members prices below (inclusive of the zine AND postage) - prices given in pounds sterling - please call up a bank to find out the current exchange rate if paying in US dollars.

OVERSEAS PRICES (PRICE FOR THE ZINE PLUS POSTAGE INCLUSIVE)

Horizons 6, 11,12 & 13 - Europe £3.20/A Zone £3.50/B Zone £3.90/C Zone £4.10/ Sea Mail to All £2.90

Horizons 7, 9 & 10 - Europe £3.00/A Zone £3.30/B Zone £3.70/C Zone £3.90/ Sea Mail to All £2.90

Horizon 1+8 - Europe £4.20/A Zone £4.50/B Zone £5.00/C Zone £5.20/ Sea Mail to All - £4.00

Interviews - Europe £4.75/A Zone £5.00/B Zone £5.55/C Zone £5.75/ Sea Mail to All £4.50

Technical Manual - Part One - Europe £5.25/A Zone £5.60/B Zone £6.00/C Zone £6.40/ Sea Mail to All £5.40

Technical Manual - Part Two - Europe £4.85/A Zone £5.15/B Zone £5.60/C Zone £6.00 Sea Mail to All £5.00

Strangers - Europe £2.70/A Zone £ 3.00/B Zone £3.55/C Zone £3.80/ Sea Mail to all £2.75

The Web - Europe £3.50/A Zone £3.95/B Zone £4.70/C Zone £5.00./ Sea Mail to all £3.25

NLs 12,18,19,20,21,22,23 - Europe £3.00/A Zone £3.50/B Zone £3.70/C Zone £4.00/ Sea Mail to all £2.70

The Epic - Europe £7.15/A Zone £7.30/B Zone £8.40/C Zone £9 Sea Mail to all £5.60

CODE - Europe... is Europe. A Zone = Near East, etc. B Zone = USA, Canada, Far East C Zone = Australia & NZ

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ORDERING ZINES VERY IMPORTANT

TO ORDER ZINES: Everywhere INCLUDING USA order from: Miss Ann Steele, Horizon, 66 Sherwood Park Road, Sutton, Surrey. ALL cheques/POs payable to HORIZON, the B7 Appreciation Society - sterling or US dollars accepted.

TO ORDER THE WEB: Everywhere order from: Diane Gies, 18 Holt Road, North Wembley, Middlesex HAO 3PS. Cheques payable to 'D. Gies' (sterling only). Americans can pay with dollar cheques payable to 'HORIZON the B7 Appreciation Society'. (OVERSEAS -to save postage and bank charges you can order THE WEB from Ann Steele.)

SUBMISSIONS - NEW ZINES... To produce these, we need NEW STORIES. We are looking for quality submissions -short, long, serious, funny, thought provoking... whatever. We have many new members now - surely some of you must be budding authors/authoresses? And don't just think 'Oh, it's pointless, they'll think it's rubbish.' You'll never know WHAT anyone will think, if you don't send it in. Come on, send your zine submissions to Jackie Ophir (large SAE if you want your story returned if we can't use it. A small SAE appreciated anyway.) You get the zine free in which your story appears.

ARTWORK... although we do have some extremely talented artists on our 'books' we are always on the lookout for more, for a greater variety (and so as not to pester the few we already use so often...) We particularly like to actually illustrate the relevant story in zines, but individual portraits, FX type drawings, or really almost anything is very welcome. Great rewards will be yours if we use 'em. Please send all your artwork to Jackie Ophir, BUT PLEASE PUT YOUR NAME ON THE BACK OF EACH PIECE, and send SAE for their return if we don't use them. Thank you.

HORIZON MUGS (NEW)

To celebrate our 10th Birthday, we are introducing Mugs to our merchandise list. With silver artwork on a black background, these are a 'must' for the Horizon member's coffee table. Front is the Horizon logo with our Birthday Motto (with thanks to Vila Restal) on the rear - "We're Going To Live Forever... or Die Trying!"

Cost £3.00 each, plus £1.25 p&p (UK), £2.50 (Europe), A Zone £3/B Zone £4/C Zone £5. No sea mail rate - I don't think the mugs would last through the journey!! Order Mugs from Steve Haines, cheques payable to Horizon.



Photo
by
Kevin
Davies

BLAKE'S SEVEN SCRIPTS

We have a pretty comprehensive list of rehearsal script copies, but have to photo copy them to order, so there is sometimes a bit of a wait for completion of script orders. They average out at 130 pages each, and are obviously very heavy, so postage costs too are quite high. Anyway, we have available currently the following:

SPACEFALL	CYGNUS ALPHA	TIME SQUAD
THE WEB	MISSION TO DESTINY	DUEL
DELIVERANCE	ORAC	REDEMPTION
SHADOW	HORIZON	PRESSURE POINT
STAR ONE	POWERPLAY	VOLCANO
HARVEST OF KAIROS	CITY A.T.E.O.T.WORLD	RUMOURS OF DEATH
SARCOPHAGUS	MOLOCH	DEATH-WATCH
TERMINAL	RESCUE	SAND
ORBIT	BLAKE	

Bold = new

Cost: £5.50 each + £1 p&p (UK) Overseas **additional** POSTAGE cost: Eurp £2.95 A Zone £3.60 B Zone £4.90
C Zone £5.60 SEA MAIL TO ANYWHERE £2.00

All scripts order from: Ann Steele. All cheques/POs payable to HORIZON, the B7 Apprec. Society - for sterling OR US dollars.

PHOTOS

We have now amalgamated the nine old photo lists titled: January 85, May 85, April 86, October 86, June 87, November 87, June 88, December 88, July 89. All new members USED TO receive the amalgamated list on joining, however it is proving too expensive to send it out to everyone since only about 25% of new members are ordering photos, so we will still provide the full list free to new members but **ONLY** if you ask for it... (and either include SAE or envelopes + postage cost with your request, or it will be sent with your next N/L if you don't). Episode photos, B7 cast in non-B7 roles, FX pictures are all TELEPICS - pictures taken from the TV screen. Special Event (eg con) photos are 'live'. We also have some excellent Special Event and Miscellaneous photos, taken and donated by other members, and some of your committee. There may or may not be a new photo list out in time for this N/L. We were hoping to have it sorted out, but the printers lost some of our originals... ho hum! *And, it's not ready!*

ALL photos must be ordered from Juliette Christuski. Cost is 40p per photo (regular size) + an SAE large enough to send you back your order. (Overseas postage cost - £1 for up to 15 photos, then add 40p for each additional 10 photos. For US \$, convert this

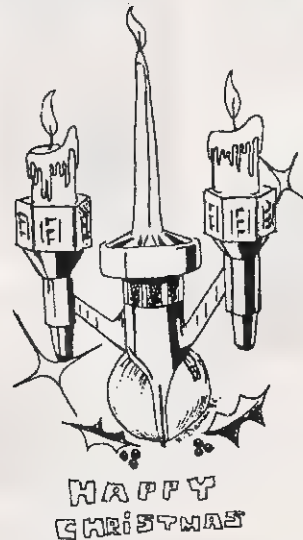
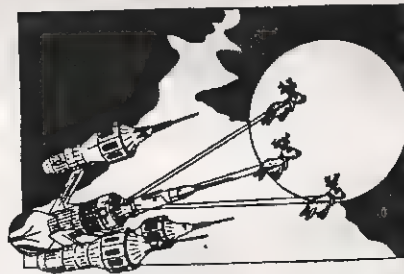
amount to the current \$ rate and make \$ cheques payable to 'HORIZON, the B7 Appreciation Society.) When ordering, it is helpful if you write out your order in the order they appear on the lists, and make sure you write down the correct code. They generally take around 4 weeks to process.

PS Please keep your lists for the future - it costs us a lot of money to keep reprinting them.

NOTE: We will probably be having to put up the price of photos to around 50p from the next newsletter, so hurry and order now!!

BLAKE'S SEVEN CHRISTMAS CARDS

Four designs available. 3 humorous ones, and a 'straight' one. Wording inside is SEASONS GREETINGS. Cost is 70p + 20p p&p UK, £1 postage for overseas - for which you get 6 cards & 6 envelopes. Mixed colours - sometimes blue, sometimes green, depends what we have in stock. Don't forget to state which designs you want, please. (Ask for STRAIGHT; REINDEER; CANDLE SHIP or CANDLE GUN). **EVERYONE** now orders from Steve Haines. All cheques/POs payable to HORIZON, the B7 Appreciation Society sterling or US dollars.



STICKERS (SLOGANS)

50p per 100 stickers + an SAE as follows: up to 200 - standard env. & 18p stamp. 300/500 - 9X4" STRONG env. & 24p stamp. (Overseas add 50p per 100 to cost of order). Unused UK stamps accepted up to £1.

You may order EITHER a 'Mixed Batch' with a few of each, OR you can have 100 of a particular slogan. During the last year sticker sales have been pretty low, and we are thinking of discontinuing the service after we sell out of current stock. Prove us wrong, and order some stickers now... from Nicola Best.

CLEAN UP THE GALAXY - DRAIN A MUTOID

PLAY IT AGAIN, ZEN

I WANT A DECIMA FOR XMAS

STAY CALM - DRINK PYLENE 50

BLAKE'S 7 - FEDERATION 0

GET AHEAD - GET A MULLER

THE FEDERATION CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH

VILA REACHES THE PARTS OTHER THIEVES CANNOT REACH

ALL THAT DOES NOT GLITTER, MIGHT BE TRANSMUTED GOLD!

DEL BOY TARRANT: 'HAVE I GOT A FLIER FOR YOU, MY SON... ?'

DON'T GET MAD, GET AVON

VILA'S SPIRIT LIVES ON

'ANIMALS' - PLAN 9 FROM THE BBC

YES MASTER.'

BEWARE AVON'S SMILE

TRAVIS IS 'ARMLESS, VILA IS LEGLESS

MAKE AVON HAPPY - SHOOT A FRIEND

PHOTO STAMPS

We now have 16 beautiful designs in the **REGULAR SIZE**, as follows:



NOTE: These (shown above) are actual size, and in colour. They are sticky labels (like our sticker slogans) but with photos instead of slogans. Prices are 70p for sheet of 10 stickers (of one design) + postage, which is an SAE for UK orders, or o/seas 2 IRCs or 50p in unused UK stamps or cash, or US\$1 for every 3 sheets of stickers. Please, USA orderers, remember that the postage costs must be ADDED to the 70p (or \$ equivalent) per sheet of stamps, apparently many of you have been sending just the postage money and thinking it covers the piccies too!!

ALSO - 2 GIANT PHOTO STAMPS (roughly the size of 6 of the above all together) of 2 designs available: **THE LIBERATOR** and **THE BLAKE'S SEVEN LOGO**. These are very useful for car stickers, marking suitcases, etc. and look lovely. Cost of these is 50p EACH plus postage. Postage same as for the little ones, count 1 GIANT sticker as 1 sheet of baby stickers for postage rates.

ALL photo stamps now to be ordered from Stephen Haines, 14 Halliwell Avenue, Hathershaw, Oldham, Lancs. OL8 3DL. Please state whether you want Liberator, 4th Series crew, 1st Series crew, Avon, Jenna, Cally, Vila, Blake, Tarrant, Servalan, Scorpio, B7 logo, Servalan+Travis II, Travis I, Avon+Vila, or Carnell (and how many sets of each). We hope to add more designs in the future - your suggestions welcomed.

KEY RINGS

We also sell some amazingly useful key rings, into which you stick one of the above photo stamps (or even the slogan stickers). The entire body of the key ring is slightly larger than the above photo stamps, plus the actual ring bit for attaching your keys!

Cost is 75p + a small SAE (UK) or 3 IRCs or 50p in cash or UK postage stamps or US\$1. For this you get one keyring, filled with two photo stamps.

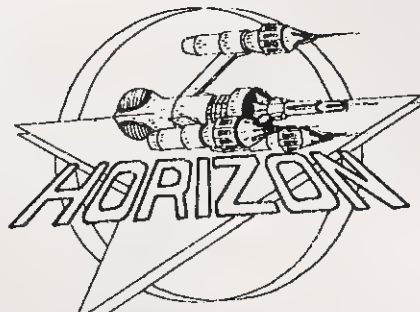
Order from Stephen Haines (see address above) but remember to make ALL CHEQUES payable to HORIZON... and please state:

a) What colour key ring you want (BLACK or GREY)

b) What photo stamps you want (or slogan stickers)

THE HORIZON BADGE

Only 40p (+ a small SAE/SASE + 2 IRCs or US\$1 bill) buys you the amazingly classy HORIZON badge, designed by the talented Danny Dresner. It is a rectangular shape, and the colours are: white Liberator, against silver Fed. logo, bright shocking pink HORIZON lettering, against black background. Order from Ann or Juliette or Nicola or Jackie or Stephen - whoever you may be writing to at the time. Unused UK postage stamp to the value of 30p accepted for this small amount.



TIM PIERACCINI ARTWORK FOR SALE - PORTRAITS AND POSTERS

Those of you who have been buying our zines, and who previously bought the ORBIT (from the old LPF) and SLAVE zines will be familiar with Tim's work. Tim is probably the UK's best known B7 artist, and has produced some absolutely stunning work, and we are proud to be able to offer a whole range of his portraits and posters for sale.

A4 size portraits (head & shoulders) - copies of ink - 20p each: (Minimum order -2 portraits)

1 - Blake (early); 2 - Blake (early); 3 - Blake (4th S); 4 - Jenna; 5 - Jenna; 6 - Avon (S1); 7 - Avon (S3); 8 - Avon (S3); 9 - Avon (S3); 10 - Avon (S3); 11 - Avon (S2); 12 - Avon (S4); 13 - Avon (S4); 14 - Paul Darrow; 15 - Avon (LS3); 16 - Avon (S3); 17 - Avon (S4); 18 - Paul D as Thomas Doughty (Drake's Venture); 19 - Avon (S2); 20 - Cally (S3); 21 - Cally (S2); 22 - Jan Chappell; 23 - Jan Chappell; 24 - Cally (S2); 25 - Vila (S2); 26 - Vila (S4); 27 - Michael Keating; 28 - Vila (S3); 29 - Gan; 30 - Dayna (S4); 31 - Dayna - S4; 32 - Tarrant (S4); 33 - Tarrant (S3); 34 - Steven Pacey; 35 - Soolin (hair down); 36 - Soolin (hair up); 37 - Soolin (hair in pony tail); 38 - Servalan (S4); 38(a) - Servalan looking up + Tarrant & Servalan in background & Avon bottom right of pic.; 38(b) - Servalan in profile (S4); 39 - Servalan (S3); 40 - Travis I; 41 - Travis I; 42 - Travis II; 43 - Vila & Avon + Cally 'in spirit' (S4); 44 - Vila & Avon (S3); 45 - Cally, Avon, Tharn; 46 - Avon & Shrinker; 47 - Avon & Servalan above/Tarrant & Sleer below; 48 - Brian Croucher;

A3 sized posters - copies of ink drawings - 40p each:

1st Series Poster (Blake, Jenna, Avon, Cally, Vila, Gan)

3rd Series Poster (Avon, Cally, Vila, Tarrant, Dayna & Liberator)

4th Series Poster (Avon, Vila, Tarrant, Dayna, Soolin, Blake silhouette, Scorpio)

A3 sized Special 10th Anniversary Poster - copies of ink drawings - 50p each

(Blake, Jenna, Avon, Cally, Vila, Gan, Tarrant, Dayna, Soolin, Servalan, Travis I, Travis II.) Specially produced for Horizon.

POSTAGE COSTS - (based on using cardboard tubes)

	UK	OVERSEAS
1/10 prints	35p	£1.25
11/20 prints	45p	£1.70
21+ prints	55p	£2.50

TO ORDER: Order from Stephen Haines, 14 Halliwell Avenue, Hathershaw, Oldham, Lancs. OL8 3DL. Payment may be made in sterling cheques, or equivalent in US\$ cheques, payable to HORIZON, THE B7 APPRECIATION SOCIETY. Small amounts (ie. a minimum order of 2 portraits, or 1 poster) you may pay in unused UK postage stamps, or cash (at your own risk, remember our pathetic postal service) in sterling or US\$ NOTES.

LIBERATOR MODELS (NEW) - The long awaited 9" injection kit of THE LIBERATOR is now available from Comet Miniatures, and HORIZON is offering it to members at a nice little discount. Retail price is £18.95 plus £1.50 p&p but HORIZON is selling them at only £16.50 plus £1.50 p&p (UK). The kit comes in a flatpack and detailed instructions (using some drawings from our Technical Manual - fame at last!!). It has over 200 parts, although some of these are very tiny 'detailing' parts, plus etched brass. Explicit details of how to make up the kit can be found elsewhere in this N/L.

Order Liberator model kits from Stephen Haines (address as above).

HOW TO ORDER ALL THE ABOVE MENTIONED HORIZON MERCHANDISE

PLEASE order ONLY from the person mentioned by the relevant merchandise. We are sorry if it means writing more than one letter, especially overseas folks - I know it's expensive - but we don't all live next door each other, and often don't see one another for months at a time, and it is difficult to pass things backwards and forwards. Often your orders get mixed up, or lost, or at the least delayed if you send it to the wrong person. Please help us to help you.

UK UNUSED POSTAGE STAMP BUYING SERVICE

In return, we have thought of a way to help our overseas friends... Isn't it a nuisance when before ordering merchandise from the umpteen UK clubs and zine publishers you have to first send them a self-addressed envelope + 2 or 3 of those wretched IRCs (international reply coupons)? What would be so much easier is if you could send all these people envelopes with English stamps on... well, now you can. We will be happy to sell you, at face value, English stamps for you to use for SAEs, queries, etc. in the future IF YOU ARE ALREADY BUYING HORIZON MERCHANDISE. (Sorry, we can't just sell you the stamps unless you are already ordering something otherwise it is likely to cause too much work and confusion.) SO... what do you do? If you order any merchandise from either Ann Steele, Juliette Christuski, Stephen Haines or enter the newsflash system with Mary Moulden, just add to your merchandise cheque some extra money and they will send you unused British postage stamps to that extra value (in small denominations) when they send your order. Good idea, eh? Remember, it costs 35p for a one word answer to a query, and around 55p for posting out information leaflets, (it's no use you buying stamps and then sending someone too little postage to cover it) This service should hopefully save you a good deal of money in the long run, as buying IRCs is horribly expensive and we only get 22p for each IRC you send us (regardless of how much YOU have paid for it).

AND NOW... USA POSTAGE STAMP BUYING SERVICE

OK you Brits, we agree it isn't fair for you to have to buy IRCs for a reply when writing to USA clubs/zine editors. We have therefore obtained a supply of USA 45c stamps (a one page reply from the States is apparently covered by one of these) and you can buy 2 for 60p from Steve Haines only (again, only when buying club merchandise. Minimum order of 2 x 45c stamps. We hope you will find this service useful.

VERY IMPORTANT - INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAKING OUT CHEQUES

We have a special account in the Club name to enable us to cash **personal** US dollar cheques directly and so **ALL CHEQUES, BOTH STERLING AND U.S. DOLLARS ARE TO BE MADE OUT TO 'HORIZON, THE B7 APPRECIATION SOCIETY'**. Please do NOT send any cheques of any sort payable to individual people, whoever you are ordering from, if it is official HORIZON merchandise, the cheques must be payable to Horizon. Now that we have gone to the expense and trouble of opening up this account, which has taken us AGES to sort out, PLEASE help us by making the cheques out correctly. By the way - we cash our US\$ cheques IN BULK, approx. every 2 months (so don't panic if it isn't cashed straight away...)

ONE LAST THING... we're only stating the prices of things in pounds sterling. The exchange rates are changing so fast that all our overseas price lists keep being completely out of date. THEREFORE, when you write out your US dollar cheques, CHECK WITH A BANK OR NEWSPAPER WHAT THE CURRENT RATE OF EXCHANGE IS ON THE DAY YOU WRITE THE CHEQUE AND POST IT. If you convert our sterling price to dollars using too low an exchange rate, you may not receive all the goods you have ordered. PLEASE CHECK THE RATES BEFORE SENDING YOUR CHEQUE. THANK YOU.

HOW TO CONVERT STERLING INTO DOLLARS... look at the sterling price we have quoted. Then ask a bank or look in the newspapers for the current exchange rate (eg. today as I write this it is 1.64 dollars to the £) You MULTIPLY the sterling amount given by the dollar rate. The dollar amount will always be MORE than the sterling amount. (I know this is obvious to 99.99% of you, but we have had a few getting it wrong. Thank heavens for calculators!!

We can cash personal cheques of other currencies too, but WE HAVE TO PAY £6 bank charges every time we pay in a different currency. We have enough US\$ coming in to make it worth while and don't need to charge you extra, but Canadian, Australian or NZ dollars we don't. If you wish to pay by personal cheque in other than sterling or US dollars, YOU MUST ADD THE EQUIVALENT OF £6 STERLING TO THE TOTAL. (And make sure you have the conversion rate correct too.) NOTE TO USA PEOPLE - PLEASE DO NOT SEND US U.S. DOLLAR TRAVELLERS CHEQUES, WE HAVE TO PAY A SEPARATE CHARGE FOR THESE.

A FEW BLOOPERS, ETC.

Found by William Blight

Series 2

Hostage: Liberator is attacked repeatedly and, viewed from the rear, the top right section of the 'engine' melts!

Series 3

Harvest of Kairos: Not really a blooper, but if the 'alien' ship piloted by Tarrant and protected with Sopron by Avon is as good as Zen made out (from Servalan's point of view) ie being better than the Liberator, why would they want the Liberator back?

Series 4:

Power: Avon is laid out cold by a Hommik and falls in the mud, making his costume filthy. He is then dumped into the Hommiks' prison with hardly a speck on him. Perhaps they have a good dry-cleaning system for prisoners?

Headhunter: Muller, getting angry at Tarrant for bringing a black box up onto the ship, grabs the teleport control to put him back down. Vila tries to stop him and the teleport control comes away in Muller's hand!

Games: In reply to Rory Hull (N/L22), yes Orac does seem to be in two places at once, but one could be Avon's 'contingency' Orac used later in Orbit.

ORAC'S ODDMENTS

- FOR SALE:** Looking for that difficult to come by **SF model**? Why not send an SAE for 7pg comprehensive range of model kits: Gerry Anderson, Aliens, Robocop, B7, etc. We've models in stock from these and many more. Over 200 different models in stock. SAE+ 2 first class stamps, UK (3 IRCs abroad) to: Comet Miniatures, 46-48 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5RH.
- FOR SALE:** **DOWN AND UNSAFE B7 zine** - Issue 7 148 pgs, 7 stories and interviews. UK £3 incl. from M Moulden, 88 Cricket Road, Oxford, OX4 3DH. USA\$7 from M.C.Mars, 1575 A1A South, AptD7, St Augustine, FL32804. Aust/NZ \$7 from Kathy Hanson, 39, Marriotts Road, Christchurch 9, NZ. Back issues available. Also **SEVENTH SECTOR** - a 'long story' zine. 3 issues available. SAE for details.
- FOR SALE:** **VIDEOS OF CONFEDERATION (NZ B7 Con Nov 88)** two 3 hour video tapes of this convention, run by Kathy Hanson & held in New Zealand in October 88 with Paul Darrow, Michael Keating, Janet Lees Price with 50 minute panels: Paul solo, Michael solo, Janet solo, Paul & Michael. What makes these tapes so special is the Maori welcome given to the guests on their arrival in NZ. Also the infamous 'toenail' liars panel. You have to hear it to believe it! plus Paul & Michael singing. £8 for one tape, £15 for both (incl p&p) UK from Mary Moulden, rest of world (except USA) from Kathy Hanson addresses above. NTSC videos also now available - to order, send US\$30 (first class mailing) with check made payable to Patricia E Roberts, 113 Tuckerton Road, Vincentown, NJ 08088. Be sure to specify VHS or Beta format.
- FOR SALE:** **THE BLAKE'S 7 CARTOON CALENDAR 1991** - Kathy Hanson has created this with her usual cartooning skill to raise money for the Guest Fund at the Confederation Two convention. Each month features one episode. (...Ed. - it's VERY good!) UK price £3.50 + 45p p&p from Mary Moulden with cheques payable to her. For NZ/Aust prices, etc. Kathy Hanson (address above). and for USA contact Mary Mars (see above).
- FOR SALE:** **ANGLOFILE** - bimonthly N/L for US British Media Fans. \$12p.a. in US(\$15 in Canada and Mexico,\$22 elsewhere) US\$ only. SAE for info to: Goody Press, PO Box 33515, Decatur, GA 30033 USA. Contribs welcome.
- FOR SALE:** **INTERFACE** - zine of the Villaworld club. Interface 12 now available UK £2, O/S £4 air or £3 surface. Dollar equivalents plus enough for conversion welcome. Enquire for details of availability of other issues. Order from Yvette Clarke, 85, Brendon Green, Millbrook, Southampton, SO1 4BE England.
- FOR SALE:** **GAMBIT 5** from Peacock Press. 300+ pgs. Over 20 stories. \$15 first class \$13 book rate in US. Canada \$17 US air, \$15 surface. UK \$20 US air, \$18 surface. Aus/NZ \$22 US air \$18 surface. All drafts must be in US funds. Chqs payable and orders to: Jean Graham, 5417 Streamview Dr., San Diego, CA 92105 USA. Full merchandise list for Peacock press also available.
- FOR SALE:** **SYZYGY** - a multi media fanzine now into its 4th issue. For more details contact Pearl Stickler, 4604 Glacier Avenue, San Diego, CA 92120 USA.
- FOR SALE:** **PROGRAM** - B7 fifth series. 13 episodes in 4 parts. **GHOST B7** a sixth series. 4 parts currently available. All A4 reduced A5: Ghost No1 96 pgs, all other parts approx. 116 pgs each. Orders: UK & USA to Miss Judith Seaman, 3, Blithfield Gdns, Chellaston, Derby, DE7 1XQ, England. UK prices Ghost 1: £2.50; all rest £3.00. USA - Ghost 1 £4 or US\$7 cash. Rest £4.50 or \$8 cash each. If you wish to pay by US\$ cheque, please add US\$5 per chq to cover bank charges. All US prices include air mail delivery. Aus/NZ - apply to Vennessa Kelly, 35 Goorawin Road, Orange, NSW 2800 Australia.
- CLUB:** **ZZ9 PLURAL Z ALPHA** - whether you're the greatest Guide fan in the universe, or just plain weird, ZZ9 is THE club to join. Quarterly NL, merchandise, fiction, etc, SAE/IRCs for further info to Noel Collyer, 17, Guildford Street, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 3LA, England.
- FOR SALE:** **SAMURAI ERRANT** - a Buckaroo Banzai fanzine. Issue 3 out now. Adult content. Contributions and expressions of interest are called for, as well as illos, stories, poems, etc. Further details from Julie 'Stew' Bozza, 3/13-15 Mowatt St, Queanbeyan, NSW, Australia 2620.
- FOR SALE:** **CHRONICLE** - collection of short stories by some of fan fiction's best writers, e.g. Wendy Ingle, Margaret Scroggs, Ros Williams, etc. Approx. 50 A4 pgs, fully illus. Nos. 1&2 £1.25 UK, £2.50 O/seas. No3 £1.50 UK, £3.00 O/seas, and **DESTINY** - the popular B7/DW/HH zine ('83 to '87) - articles, fiction, reviews, poetry and illus. Nos 5-9 75p each, £1.50 O/seas. All prices incl. p&p. Chqs/MOs payable to: Mr E Rackstraw, 279, Abbey Road, Basingstoke, Hants, RG24 9EQ.
- FOR SALE:** **AVON 1** - trilogy, composed of 'Aftermath', 'Timeslip' and 'Nightmare' by Yvette Clarke and Brenda Callagher. £2.00 incl.(UK); £3.00 incl (Aus). Available from Ann Bown, 37A Byfleet Avenue, Old Basing, Basingstoke, Hants RG24 0HR. USA \$3.00 incl. from Joanne Stone, 1781 Fernwood Lane, Plainfield, NJ 07060USA. (More classic B7 tales reprinted from days of old.)
- FOR SALE:** **EXCLUSIVE 3D HOLOGRAM PENDANTS** - only a few now left, including Dolphin, Horse head, Dragon, King Tut, Pyramids, Watch Movement, Rose, Crucifix etc. Full list of current stock and illus. leaflet from Diane Gies, Horizon Club Sec, 18, Holt Road, N.Wembley, Middx, HA0 3PS.
- FOR SALE:** **A GESTETNER** - the old Horizon Gestetner duplicating machine has finally been put out to pasture. If anyone out there wants or knows anyone who wants one, a small club or group, or whatever, please contact Diane Gies. It needs a good clean up and possibly a service (although if it's cleaned properly it may not need servicing) otherwise works very well. Can't find the model number, but it works manually OR automatically. Mega-large stack of inks, stencils, correcting fluid packs too - can be sold separately or together. £50 or near offer?
- FOR SALE:** **THE WEB** - Issue 1 of this B7 zine produced by Diane Gies. Two stories - 'These Our Actors' and 'The Alternative Rescue', with artwork. See Horizon merchandise listings for full prices and info. Order from Diane Gies. No 2 being worked on (very slowly...)
- CLUB:** **EMPATHY** - long running Star Trek club, producing NLs and fanzines. Info from Carol Keogh, 131 Norman Rd, Leytonstone, London E11. ROS club also from this address.
- CLUB:** **THE 13TH TRIBE** - the British 'Battlestar Galactica' fan club. Quarterly n/l's, many fanzines and other merchandise available from 19, Woodlands Road, Stanton, Burton on Trent, Staffs, DE15 9TH.
- CLUB:** **THE TV ENTHUSIASTS CLUB** : if you have an opinion to express, don't bottle it up, send it to us. No show is too obscure, no subject is too dire to mention. We produce monthly n/l's, keeping members up to date on events on the TV and providing a platform for members' reviews, LOCs and discussions. £3 per year or £12 to USA. Further details from Sue Trent, 84, Daisy Road, Brighouse, W.Yorks HD6 3SX. Also etc this address for the **Unofficial David Hedison Fan Club**.
- FOR SALE:** **TELEPORT RANGE** - a new B7 zine from Fliss Davies. Issue 1 contains 3 stories. 72 pages. prof. printed A4 with glossy card cover. £4.10 incl. More details from Fliss Davies, 53, Vaughan Road, Birkdale, Southport, Merseyside PR8 4BX, England.

- FOR SALE:** **ACTION NOT WORDS** - we would like to introduce you to an area of fantasy you may not have met before. 'ANW' is a fanzine devoted to live role playing (LRP). LRPers do it for real' - they are fantasy role players who play their characters in 'Real' life instead of on a table top. We have a diary of events, conventions, a letters page and a non-commercial 'Play by Mail' section. More details from David Hewitt, Freepost, Nelson, Lancs, BB9 5BR, England.
- FOR SALE:** **B7 ZINE BROTHER OF SHADOWS... AND SON OF LIGHT** - a PGP story by US writer Susan Matthews, illustrated by Susan Lovett. Avail. from OSIRIS Publications, 8928 North Olcott Avenue, Morton Grove, IL 60053 for \$25 inc.p&p (USA). Chqs. payable to J.Harrison UK/AUS/NZ - enquire at above address for o/seas prices.
- CLUB:** **THE UNEARTHLY CHILDREN** - primarily a DW club, but with some B7 too. Monthly N/Ls, meetings more info & application form etc. The UnEarthly Children, PO Box 642, Richboro, PA 18954,USA.
- CLUB:** **ST/ING SF GROUP** in Scotland produces n/l 'Sickbay'. Ctc. Avril A. Brown, 26 Rumblingwell, Dunfermline, KY12 9AS, Fife. (note new address) Send your used postage stamps to this address in aid of The British Diabetic Association.
- FOR SALE:** **Convention photos** from DSV1, Space City 88, Gambit 89, Scorpio VII. Also B&W **photo portraits** of Gareth Thomas (back cover Hor. n/l 21), Jacqui Pearce, Peter Tuddenham, Michael Keating, Terry Nation, Sheelagh Wells, Ed Bishop, Dolores Mantez, Stephen Greif, Paul Darrow. Also, **location photos** of Josette Simon (World In Action), Large SASE for full list and prices to Jackie Ophir, 490c Bury New Road, Salford 7, Manchester M7 0WN, England.
- FOR SALE:** **TELEPICS NOW!** - Lots and lots of B7. Also UFO, Randall and Hopkirk, Alias Smith and Jones, Robin of Sherwood, Star Cops. Telepics taken to order. 50p each. Ctc. Jackie Ophir, address as above.
- FOR SALE:** **B7 5th Series: "Flightback"** £2.70; **"Selfsearch"** £2.20. O'seas together £4. **"Double Image"**, £1.20 or £1.50 o/seas: **"Bloodline"** £1.80 or £2.20 o/seas. NEW **"Frame-up"** £3.00 or £3.40 o/seas. Overseas - cash please. Any two or more titles, total price less 25p. Order from Margaret Scroggs, 21 Farmland Walk, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 6JH, England.
- FOR SALE:** **CENTERO** - A B7 and other SF TV discussion zine published since 1982. Articles, short fiction, zine reviews, etc. Send 2 IRCs for more details to: Nikki White, 15 Duffus Place, Wanniasa, ACT 2903, Australia.
- FOR SALE:** **MULTIVERSE** - media SF fiction zine (B7,ST,DW etc.) published since 1979. 84 pages per issue. For more details contact Nikki White, address as above.
- FOR SALE:** **REBEL - B7 Zine**. Issue 7 now avail. A5 format. Price - UK £2.45. O/S surface £2.75. US Air £4.70. Aus/NZ Air £4.90. Two other new B7 zines avail. **THE ZYLANORR 1** Price UK £2.50. O/S surface £2.85. US Air £4.75. Aus/NZ Air £4.95. **THE ZYLANORR 2** - Price UK £3. O/Z Surface £3.55. US Air £5.40. Aus/NZ Air £5.60. First 6 issues of REBEL still all avail. All enquiries/orders/payments to: Margaret Martin, 40 Lefroy Street, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 1NB, Scotland, UK. Payments in sterling preferred. Payment in other currencies (bank drafts/ currency/etc) accepted, but please add £2 to order to all to help with bank charges. Contributions always wanted for further issues. Please send to above address.
- FOR SALE :** **B7 merchandise** - wide range of slogan & photostickers. Pens & keyrings also avail. plus B7 blank notecards (approx. C6 size - folded from A5). Six different. New item on my stock sheets, B7 writing paper. ROS slogan & photostickers, pens, keyrings, bookmarks & blank cards. Details from Margaret Martin as above.
- RESEARCH:** **B7 WELCOMMITTEE** A n/l for fans new to the series, which gives a long listing of clubs, fanzines etc., world-wide and provides a little news on the actors as well as credits lists for both regular actors and guests. 50p an issue within the UK, £1 everywhere else. Janet Ellicott, 43 Brooksbank House, Retreat Place, Morning Lane, Hackney, London, E9 6RN, England.
- WANTED:** **FLATMATE** - non smoking, cat loving flatmate wanted to share. Please contact Janet Ellicott.
- FOR SALE:** **ADZINE** Multi media listing of zines, clubs, cons, newsletters, etc. for all fandoms. £2 an issue in Europe, £3 everywhere else. Published quarterly. Janet Ellicott, address above.
- FOR SALE:** **SUZAN LOVETT ARTWORK** - 10X8" colour photo prints of 6 different designs of some brilliant Suzan Lovett artwork for sale. Contact Nicola Best, 71 Cowdenbeath Path, Bemerton Street, London N1 to see if your favourite piece is here. £18 + £1.50 p&p (UK) with cheques payable to N. Best.
- WANTED:** **VHS** copy of Open Air broadcast in February 1990 from Emmerdale set featuring Sally Knyvette. Also any other B7 interviews appreciated. Miss S Milton, 12 September Court, Orchard Waye, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB10 0AG.
- FOR SALE:** **TV ZONE** - SF magazine - interviews with many of the cast of B7 coming in future editions, + LOTS of B7 coverage... so buy TV ZONE! On sale in all SF outlets or by subscription.
- FOR SALE:** **Twinkl 131 heavy duty stapler** plus part box of Rexel staples No 66/11. £15 exc. p&p. Contact Elizabeth Everett, 71 Greenland Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 2RW.
- FOR SALE:** **Sets of 10 slogan stickers** (19mm x 40mm) from HHg, BG and Red Dwarf. They include "I Survived a ZZ9 Slouch", "Even Cylons Need Love" and "Infinity Welcomes Careful Drivers". Prices:- 10p for a set (18p o/seas). Variety pack of 50 is available for 40p (60p o/seas). Cheques payable to Republic and Empire Galaxies. UK postal orders payable to Anthony Richards. Payments in sterling only. Stamp or SSAE would be appreciated for small orders. Order from Republic and Empire, 29 Thropton Avenue, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE7 7NR, England.
- WANTED:** **Shadowplay** - third part of Double-Edged Sword trilogy. Contact Carole Hume, 92 Nayling Road, Braintree, Essex, CM17 7RZ. Reasonable price please as unemployed am I!
- WANTED:** **Horizon N/Ls** - being a new member I would naturally like to have a complete collection. I'm interested in all except those currently available through the club. Klaus Joergensen, Hestetangsve, 67, 3520, Farum, Denmark.
- WANTED:** **Video Collectors** to exchange recordings of British, US and Australian TV series. Contacts wanted in Great Britain and other countries. Have many SF, fantasy, action/adventure, spy, cop, drama and comedy series to trade. Iain Badger, 37 Charlotte Street, Walsall, West Midlands, WS1 2BB, England.
- WANTED:** If anybody has a video **recording of the Cagney and Lacey** episode "Let Them Eat Pretzels" (VHS or Beta) and can loan me the tape for a couple of days, please contact Cathy Holroyd on 081-310-8514.
- FOR SALE:** **B7/DW/etc. collection.** Loadsastuff - zines, books, magazines etc. For details send SAE to Ann Shields, 107 Hampton Road, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE30 3HQ.

- WANTED:** US versions of the books based on The Avengers, UFO and Space 1999. Also, does anyone have on video the series "Sky" (ITV 1975) or "The Feathered Serpent" (ITV 1976 and 1978). Contact Robert Cheadle, Copper Beech, Frith Common, Nr Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire, WR15 8JX.
- WANTED:** Autographs of William Hartnell or Patrick Troughton. Please describe item and price wanted. Write to: Jeff Abood, 2105 15th Street, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, 44223, USA.
- CLUB:** THE SAINT CLUB formed in 1936, the club is run with the full support of Leslie Charteris and produces its own range of merchandise. Quarterly newsletter available from 1990. For further details see to: Ian Dickerson, The Saint Club, Arbour Youth Centre, Shandy Street, Stepney, London E1, England.
- WANTED:** STAR COPS interviews, articles, scripts, etc. Am I the only one who liked this programme? Micky DuPree, 24 Boston St, #2, Somerville, MA, 02143, USA.
- CLUB:** SURVIVORS - send see for details of this new fan club to 4 Beech Houses, Royal Crescent, Westbrook, Margate, Kent CT9 5AL.
- CLUB:** SEA DEVILS - DW organisation for fans of the current series. Annual membership is £5, including 9 issues of newsletter: Matrix. For full details send a see to:- 53, Moor Lane, Woodvale, Southport, PR8 5NY.
- FOR SALE:** 'MASQUERADE' The How-to video of SF/horror make-up. Former BBC Make-Up Artist Sheelagh Wells demonstrates make-ups from Doctor Who, B7, Phantom, ageing, burns, blood & gore, 3-D masks and more, with introduction by Gareth Thomas. UK price £12 + £1 p&p payable to S. Wells, 20A New Road, Brentford, Middx. TW8 ONX on VHS only. NTSC copies available - US\$14.95 + \$2 p&h cheques payable to Space Rat Press, PO Box 422, Park Ridge, NJ 07656, USA - VHS only.
- PROPOSED CLUB:** LD.W.N. the International Doctor Who Network. A tentatively forming new Doctor Who group which hopes to be starting up soon! We have plenty of ideas but we need people. IDWN does not attempt to compete with other fan organisations but to work with them. If you're interested, etc. Stefan Gough, 43 Parq Du Point Marquet, Petite Routes Des Mielles, St Brelade, Jersey, Channel Islands, UK. Please enclose an addressed envelope with your enquiry + a postal order/IRC as British stamps are not valid on Jersey, they have their own!
- FOR SALE:** B7/DW/ST collection. For full details of what's on offer send an SAE to: Miss Irene Wells, 13A Octavia Road, Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 6JW.
- ORGANISATION:** BRIT TV. An organisation committed to promoting and preserving British TV in the US. Subscription of \$10 per year or \$18 per two years gets you: bimonthly N/Ls and access to a library of over 300 episodes of the best of British TV. Further info from: Brit. T.V., P.O. Box 148335, Chicago, IL 60614, USA.
- CLUB:** THE LANDING PARTY. A ST/B7 club based in Edinburgh. Regular newsletters: always looking for articles, news, etc. Regular meetings and club events including fundays, a Beach party, and a members trip to see ST5. Contact Roddy McDougall, 11/4 Meadowfield Court, Edinburgh, EH8 7NA.
- FOR SALE:** Large Collection of B7 merchandise incl. the Books, Annuals, Records, Photo cards, etc. For full details, etc. Robert Windle, 21 Aysgarth, Great Hollands, Bracknell, Berks. RG12 4SD.
- WANTED:** STORIES, poetry, art for "Forgotten Seven" a proposed zine dedicated to the forgotten characters of B7 fan-fic:- Travis, Jenna, Gan, Dayna, Soolin, Servalan and any guest characters. Send SASE or SAE and 2 IRCs for info and guidelines to: Teresa Ward, 1881 Holdway Street, Morristown, TN, 37814 USA. Also **WANTED:** photos, articles, playbills, programmes, etc. of Brian Croucher, Steven Pacey and Stephen Greif. Will buy or trade for pics of Mike, Paul and Janet in Australia.
- CLUB:** FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, The Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased) Appreciation Society. C/O Nigel Kitcher, 2 Deacon Court, Dedworth Road, Windsor.
- CLUB:** THE RANDALL AND HOPKIRK (DECEASED) APPRECIATION SOCIETY - launched in March 1989 with full ITC approval. For further details send an SAE to: 10 Brook Avenue, Edgware, Middx. HA8 9XF
- FOR SALE:** FROM CLEAN SLATE PRESS - fanzines galore on B7/BG/ROS/V. They also welcome submissions. For full zine list and more details send an SAE (US) or SAE & 2IRC's to: Clean Slate Press, c/o Sharon Monroe, 8175 Claymore Avenue East, Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota, 55076, USA.
- WANTED:** Rehearsal Script of 'SHADOW' - could some kind soul lend Ann Steele their copy of SHADOW for a week or two, as she has carelessly sold/mislaidd/eaten our script master! Free copy of another script of your choice as a reward is offered. Contact Ann at 66 Sherwood Park Road, Sutton, Surrey. Thanks.

PLEASE REMEMBER WHEN ENQUIRING ABOUT AN ITEM IN ORACS ODDMENTS TO

- SEND SELF ADDRESSED ENVELOPES WITH STAMPS OR CASH/IRC'S FOR POSTAGE and
- TELL THEM YOU SAW THE AD IN ORAC'S ODDMENTS...

HOW TO ADVERTISE IN THE ORAC'S ODDMENTS SECTION... (PLEASE NOTE NEW RATES)

MEMBERS - it appears our advertising fees/rules have confused everybody so we've decided not to charge anything for any ads from members whether it be **WANTED** or **FOR SALE**. However, if you publish a zine or NL, please put in our ad as per copy that should have been sent to you (if you haven't been sent our ad copy, please contact Fliss Davies). If you advertise other people and not us, we will be most unhappy. However, we do not want to have half our n/l taken up with ads, so PLEASE keep them short - no more than 5 of our lines, please. If you really want a longer ad, please send an SAE to Ann with the details so we can decide on a suitable fee. We also like to see copies of new zines/club newsletters (which we will return if required when viewed) to make sure we aren't advertising anything really awful. And please let Ann know if the zine you are advertising contains adult material, as this should be mentioned on the ad.

B7 CLUBS & ALL CONVENTIONS - B7 clubs with actual memberships, plus B7 and any other conventions are listed FREE in the CLUBS and CONVENTIONS section. Please send info on these to Ann Steele.

Advertisers - Please remind Ann you are alive from time to time with updates on ads. If she doesn't hear from you, she will assume you no longer want the ad to run and it will be discontinued. Orac's Oddments continues to attract a myriad of advertisers, MANY of whom are not updating their ads. If it stays the same for 2 issues, the 3rd time it will be out, unless we have a reciprocal arrangement, or you have specifically requested that it remains in. Please help us to keep the ads current and provide a useful service by letting us know of any changes or deletions.

PROPOSAL FOR SPECIAL BUMPER ADVERTISING FOR CLUBS & ZINE EDITORS... In NL 23 we proposed a special advertising feature whereby in each n/l we proposed to feature a half page on one B7 Club and a half a page on one B7 zine. There was to be no charge, all you had to do if you wanted your club or zine featured in this was to please contact Ann Steele and send your proposed copy ad in which you could explain in great detail to our 750 or so members exactly what you do/produce.

I said that all applications would be put in a 'hat' and chosen at random, obviously anticipating a large response from the many keen zine editors and club secretaries/publicity people at this great publicity opportunity. The response to this idea was quite staggering... exactly one person applied in the zine editor section. Her ad will appear in NL 25 as it arrived too late for this one. There is still a vacancy in NL 25 for the half page club section, and of course for future issues. Surely some clubs & zine editors out there would like to advertise there wares? Please get in touch with Ann ASAP. By the way, this offer only applies if we see whatever it is, first. If we aren't already 'reciprocating' we do need to view your product or you won't be considered.

CONVENTIONS

TELLY CON - 16/17 June 90 at Grand Hotel, Birmingham. Featuring Guests & screenings from Randall & Hopkirk, Gerry Anderson series, Adam Adamant Lives, The Champions, DW, B7, Avengers, Ace of Wands & more... £12.50 per day (£20 for 2 days). All proceeds to Children In Need. Ctc. Tellycon Registrations (1990), 57 Antrobus Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B73 5EJ.

FANTASIA - media SF convention 23/24 June 1990 at The Lorne Park Hotel, Glasgow. Films, videos, masquerade, midnight murder, guests, etc. SAE for info to Fantasia, 10 Atlas Road, Springburn, Glasgow G21 4TE.

THE EZEKIEL PROJECT - 6/8 July 90 at Rochester Airport Holiday Inn, Rochester, New York. 'War of the Worlds' fan convention. Invited guests Jared Martin & Richard Chaves. SASE for more info to: 'General' Jude Wilson, 43 Culver Road, Rochester, New York, NY 14620, USA.

ORBIT - 3/5 August 1990 at Holiday Inn North, Newark, New Jersey. B7 con with GOHs Paul Darrow, Janet Lees Price, Terry Nation. All usual con activities - art & charity auction, banquet, dealers, guest & fan panels, music video workshop, pool parties, etc. Reg. US\$45 until 14 July. Ctc. DownSafe Productions Inc, JAF Box 8138, New York, NY 10116, USA.

CONFICTION 1990 WORLDCON - the 48th World Science Fiction Convention, 23/27 August 1990 in the Netherlands Congress Center, The Hague, Holland. GOHs Joe Haldeman, Harry Harrison, Andrew Porter, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. Reg. £40 att/£16 supp. Increases after 31 Dec 89. Ctc. Worldcon 1990, PO Box 95370 - 2509 CJ, The Hague, Holland, or UK Agent Colin Fine, 28 Abbey Road, Cambridge, CB5 8HQ.

7% - THE CONVENTION (A SHERLOCK HOLMES EVENT) - 25/26 August 1990 at the Shepperton Moat House Hotel, Felix Lane, Shepperton, Middlesex. Guests, talks, films, competitions, etc. £25 for 2 days, £13 for 1 day. SAE for info to Miss Donna Lauchlan, 16 Tonbridge Road, West Molesey, Surrey KT8 0EL.

HOLODECK - Star Trek Convention 31 August/03 September 90 at Stakis Norfolk Gardens Hotel, Bradford. GOH Joe Haldeman. Reg. £25. Ctc. Holodeck, PO Box 628, Bristol, BS99 1TZ.

BLAKE-ATION 2 - The Revenge! 1st September 90. Even more lunacy than EVER before... Ctc. Roberta C. Roe, 'Dimensions', 61 Farnley Road, South Norwood, London SE25 6NX with SAE for details. Funds raised will go to charity.

SOMACON 2.0 - 8/9 September 90. A B7 fan-orientated Relaxacon at the Howard Johnson Conference Centre, at Chicago's O'Hare Int. Airport. For more details, SASE to: SomaCon 2.0, c/o Liberation, PO Box 06491, Chicago, IL. 60606, USA.

CONQUEST - Star Trek Con. 14/16 September 90 at Thames Polytechnic, Dartford, Kent. Ctc. Catherine Morrison, 305 Gurney Close, Harts Lane, Barking, Essex IG11 8LD.

KALEIDOSCOPE - 29/30 September 90 at the University of Bristol. All proceeds to the NSPCC. This con is devoted to the appreciation of all areas of classic TV fantasy with a specific emphasis on Dr Who, both past & present. More details from: Kaleidoscope, 7 Overhill, Pill, Nr. Bristol, Avon BS20 0JZ.

TKON 1990 - the 5th Genesis II Star Trek Convention, 5/7 October 90. At The Novotel, Coventry. Reg. £10 or £5 for Saturday only. Ctc. Susan Whiffin, 12 Marlow Road, Hurley, Nr. Atherstone, Warks. CV9 2NG.

ARMADACON II - 10/11 November 90 at The Arts Centre, Breton Side, Plymouth. GOHs Anne McCaffrey, Adrian Cole, Brian Lumley & Sylvester McCoy. Reg. £15 (weekend) or £7.50 (1 day) to Jan.90; rising to £18 (weekend) £9 (1 day). Children under 14 half price. No unaccompanied children under 12. Enquiries to ARMADACON, c/o Mariton Cornell, 4 Gleneagle Avenue, Mannamead, Plymouth, Devon PL3 5HL.

CONFEDERATION TWO - 16/18 November 90, Christchurch, New Zealand. Confirmed GOHs (subject to commitments) Jacqueline Pearce. Fan GOH Sheila Willis. Venue Christchurch Town Hall. Reg. \$40 NZ/AUS/US or £20. O/seas personal cheques in own currency welcome. For more details, SAE to: Kathy Hanson, 39 Marriots Road, Christchurch, New Zealand. Do book this one early as a) registrations are limited to 250 and expected to fill fast and b) hotels may book up VERY early as this is peak season.

HUTTCON 1990 - Multi-media con. 23/25 November 90 at Diplomat Hotel, 12 Acland Street, St Kilda, Australia. Reg. AUS\$50. Supporting AUS\$25. More info from Edwina Harvey, 12 Flinders Street, Matraville, W. Australia.

THE TENTH LEONARD NIMOY CONVENTION - November 90. For full details & reg. forms, SAE to: Carol Davies, 77 The Ridings, Ealing, London W5 3DP.

THE (ALMOST) CHRISTMAS CONVENTION - 1/2 December 90 at Diplomat Hotel, The Monument, St Mary Street, Cardiff. Multi media con with proposed guests from world of TV & literature, fancy dress, team trivia, video programmes, etc. For further info, ctc: Concussion, c/o Carolyn Douglas, 32B Ballards Lane, London N3 2HB.

UFP 91 - 03/06 May 91. Star Trek Con. at Grand Hotel, Birmingham. Reg. £25. Details from Roz & Dave Liddle, 61 The Scotchhill, Keresley, Coventry, W. Midlands CV6 2EW.

I N F O R M A T I O N

BLAKE'S 7 CLUBS:

AVON - mainly Paul Darrow club, with general B7. NLs, info, etc. SAE/IRCs to Mrs Ann Bown, 37a Byfleet Avenue, Old Basing, Basingstoke, Hants. RG24 0HR. Also 2 zines now out - see Oracs Oddments. Run with full cooperation of Paul and Janet Darrow.

BLAKE'S 7 SWAP & BUY CLUB - free service to help fans swap, buy, sell anything to do with B7. SAE or 2 IRCs for full list to Anthony King, 30 Midlothian Street, Clayton, Manchester M11 4EP.

VILAWORLD - appreciation society for Michael Keating in particular, and B7 in general. NLs and free photo. SAE/IRCs to: Yvette Clarke, 85 Brendon Green, Millbrook, Southampton SO1 4BE. Also club zines, Interface (No. 12 now out) and Quicksilver Rising (adult B7).

BLAKE'S REVELS - produce Revel Times N/L. Ctc. Pearl Stickler, 4604 Glacier Avenue, San Diego, CA 92120, USA.

BLAKE'S SEVERAL - Houston area B7 fan group. N/L & monthly meetings + zine Standard by Several. Ctc. Box 1766, Bellaire, TX 77402, USA.

CHILDREN OF AURON - this club was temporarily disbanded due to a forest fire destroying the house of the Co-Presidents with, of course, all the club records & materials. They are hoping to start running again, and are looking for new members and contributors. Ctc. Thor Thomas, PO Box 14143, Boulder, Colorado 80308-4143, USA.

THE CYGNUS ALPHANS - Philadelphia area B7 fan group. \$6 per year (USA) entitles you to a monthly N/L - 'Liberator Log', monthly meetings & access to Pen Pal Services, fan fiction writers exchange to name but a few. For more info, etc. The Cygnus Alphans, 114-07 Revere Road, Rummymede, NJ 08078, USA.

LIBERATION - Chicago area B7 fans network, with monthly meetings, monthly N/L 'Liberation', special events, lending library, area fans contact list, lots more... Out-of-towners welcome too. SASE to Jeanne de Vore, 3157 North Hudson, Apt. C-1, Chicago, IL 60657, USA.

THE NORTH AMERICAN FANS OF PAUL DARROW - PO Box 4581, Macon, GA 31208, USA. A club following Paul's career.

ORAC - A North Texas club. For more info. send SAE to: ORAC, c/o Remember When Bookshop, 2431 Valwood Parkway, Dallas, Texas 75234, USA. Attention Sandy Williams.

PAUL DARROW APPRECIATION SOCIETY (PDAS) - a newsletter club dedicated to following the career of Paul Darrow. US\$8 for quarterly N/L inside USA. Ctc. PDAS, 1415 Madrone Lane, Davis CA 95616, USA.

THE PRYDONIANS OF PRYNCETON - a DW/B7 Club, publishing the monthly NL 'The Prydonian Renegade'. For dues & further info. ctc. The Prydonians of Prynceton, PO Box 3194, Princeton, NJ 08543-3194, USA.

THE SOPRON ALLIANCE - open to any relatively adult B7 fan who wants to have a fun time & disregard the civilised standards of humour. Crazy n/l 'On the Rocks'. More details from Linda De Santis c/o Sopron Alliance, Box 103, Oakland Gardens Station, Bayride, NJ 11364, USA. \$8 to US, \$13 o/seas.

LIBERATOR AUSTRALIS - A brand new Australian B7 club. Dues Aus\$10 a year (in Australia), enquire for overseas. Ctc. Kathryn Andersen, Liberator Australis, PO Box 305, West Heidelberg, Victoria 3081, Australia.

STORMWARNING - New Zealand's very first B7 fan club. Issues 1 to 3 now out. For more details, ctc. STORMFORCE 7, 17 Kaimui Road, Hataitai, Wellington 3, New Zealand.

P R O F E S S I O N A L D E A L E R S

AT THE SIGN OF THE DRAGON - 131 Sheen Lane, London SW14 8AE. SF specialists, books, magazines, etc. SAE for full catalogue (9X6 env. + 34p stamp UK or 2 IRCs) **FORBIDDEN PLANET** - now moved to: 71 New Oxford Street, London W1. Vast selection of almost everything - books, magazines, comics, zines, photos, etc. **THUNDERBOOKS** - 332 Lytham Road, South Shore, Blackpool. **MODEL SHOP** - 209 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3NW. **FANTAST MEDWAY LTD.** - 39 West Street, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 2LX. Large SAE/IRCs for catalogue. **SCIENCE FICTION BOOKSHOP** - 40 West Crosscauseway, Edinburgh, Scotland. **S AND F PARKER (MOVIE MARKET)** - specialists in b/w (and now colour) film and TV photos, posters, etc. Send SAE for free illus. catalogue: Medlycott Centre, Gainsborough, Milborne Port, Sherborne, Dorset DT95BA. **ACE COMICS** - 6 Museum Street, Colchester, Essex, UK. **THE MOVIE STORE** - 7 High Street, Twyford, Berks RG10 9AB, UK. **SHEFFIELD SPACE CENTRE** - 33 The Wicker, Sheffield S3 8HS, UK. **DESTINY ONE** - Pickwick Arcade, Fore Street, Exeter, UK. **MOM & THE BOYS** - specialising in models + unique model of Scorpio clip-guns. 35 Abbey Road, Bearwood, Birmingham B67. **INTERGALACTIC ENTERPRISES** - Corn Exchange, Hanging Ditch, Manchester. **FANTASY BOOKS**, 119 W. Main St., Collinsville, IL. 62234, USA. SASE for details. **LARRY'S COMIC BOOK STORE** - 1219A W. Devon Avenue, Chicago, IL. 60660, USA. **GALAXY BOOKSHOP** - 203b Castlereagh Street, Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia. **MINOTAUR BOOKS** - 128 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

THE HORIZON POETRY COMPETITION - RESULTS

Compiled at Midnight by Jackie Ophir

General Remarks

Well, there was a phenomenal response to this competition! We had loads of entries from both sides of the Atlantic & Downunder - in just about every type of poem form; including limerick, ballad, filk, theatrical monologue, sonnet & Haiku!

I was rather surprised that some people submitted poems that had actually been previously published, as I kind of thought it went without saying that competition entries, like all submissions to Horizon, should be original and unpublished. Obviously, we couldn't award them a prize, (which is a shame, as some of them were excellent) - but as it seems that people don't mind reading the same poem in more than one zine, we'd like to print some of them in future issues of Horizon. Or perhaps we'll do a one-off Horizon Poetry Zine - if enough people are interested. (Shut up, Diane, I wasn't asking you!)

Judging the poems wasn't always easy, and frequently gave rise to such discussions as: "I like it, but is it poetry?" and "What is a poem, anyway?" Eventually we came up with the following definition:

Although prose can sound poetic (eg Ray Bradbury, Tanith Lee), poetry is more than just prose broken into short lines. It requires rhythm, structure and form, though not necessarily rhyme. Rhyming is hard, and making a non-rhyming poem work is even harder, because such poems must carry the reader in other, more subtle ways. The purpose of any device within a poem (rhyme, rhythm, assonance, alliteration etc) should be to provide structure and add to the meaning. If prose is defined as 'words in the best order', then poetry is 'the best words in the best order'.

When judging the poems, we looked at the structure, the treatment of the subject - a few EXCELLENT poems were felt to be not closely enough related to B7. And as poems are meant to be read aloud, we tested their 'read-aloud-ability' by reading them to each other (sometimes down the phone...). This also tested the rhythm of the poems, and whether they scanned. And since poetry is an emotive form of writing, we judged the poems also according to the effect they had on the readers, ie whether the humorous ones made us laugh, whether the serious ones moved us (the 'gulp factor'!) or made us think. Of course, completely different rules applied for judging the Vagon poems, but more of that later! Although there were only meant to be three categories, (Serious, Humorous and Vagon), we had to create an extra two to accommodate all the winners! There is now a Special Category for two of the entries in the serious section, and a Special Category for Failed Vagons! (But again, more of that later)

Enough introduction, on with the poetry...

CATEGORY A) - SERIOUS

This was the category in which we had the most entries, but there was no hesitation in choosing the winner. The following poem has everything - rhyme, two kinds of rhythm, an original treatment of a popular subject incorporating quotes from the episode. And it has the highest 'gulp factor' of all the entries! Jacqui wins a copy of our forthcoming Poetry Zine, a magnificent prize to be negotiated with her, and fame... Paul Darrow read out her poem at Space City 90 and we will be providing her with an audio copy of the reading.

WINNER - Jacqui Topp

FACING THE FACTS - (After 'Orbit')

Vila

Now at last I come to see
Kerr Avon's friendship's never free,
And those who trust him pay the price
For warming to a man of ice.
Was I foolish to imagine that we shared a special bond,
A sense of easy comradeship - that together we belonged?
But he shows no sign of sorrow, no glimmer of regret,
I feel a part of me has died -
"It's a trip I won't forget."

Avon

So my friend you've learnt at last,
The lessons taught you in the past,
That to trust someone's a grave mistake -
The greatest error one can make.
No doubt you feel you've been betrayed and blame me for your pain,
But my instinct cried 'survival' - and I'd do the same again.
For I never hid my ruthlessness, it was there for all to see,
Just so long as it's not 'you or I' -
"You know you are safe with me."

RUNNER-UP - Priscilla Fitcher**ALIEN THOUGHTS**

*Affection? For him? Oh, no!
He tugs not at all at my heart.
And yet - he does need affection,
Despite his wish to be one apart.*

*Perhaps I do owe him something.
Loyalty! But not quite my trust.
So my heart will remain free forever,
'Til these alien bones are dust.*

*His disdain is almost tangible.
What secret does he hide?
I doubt I will ever know his thoughts
'Til the day I die by his side.*

*However near - or far off, that day is,
However bitter - or sweet, life's pill,
I know I will stay with this crew and this ship,
And that diamond-bright mind will intrigue me still.*

RUNNER-UP - Teresa Ward**FOR MARYATT**

*"Half the lesson the death of an enemy;
The other half is the death of a friend."
I keep hearing the words over and over;
I wonder, will it ever end?*

*Yes, it was a friend I lost,
Though some may not believe
That a hardened, angry man like me
Is still quite able to grieve.*

*But sadness, though not outwardly shown,
Can nestle deep inside,
And nurture feelings long forgotten -
Feelings I thought had died.*

*But duty calls, I must obey;
A good soldier to the end.
There's neither time nor place for me
To shed a tear for the death of a friend.*

*"How do you demonstrate the death of a friend
to a man who hasn't got any?" Blake - 'Duel'*

RUNNER-UP - Kathryn Andersen**TEMPERED BLADE**

*Life taught me hardness
armoured insulation, steel beauty
chill, impervious, a shell of ice, concealing diamond fire.*

*Life taught me sharpness
of eye, of hand, of mind
an edge that makes me first to strike
in vengeance or defence
and the last left standing.
So honed am I.
Skills dearly bought, cheaply sold;
buyers would not pay my cost -
the price of pain and dear lives lost
that fuelled my learning,
ground my edge to adamant.*

*Life taught me loyalty
to myself and to my dead.
I gave the gift of vengeance
the debt of honour paid
the arrow striking target, now mislaid.
Now I sell my skill for targets
and never miss.*

RUNNER-UP - Gill Marsden

LAMENTATION FOR UNFINISHED BUSINESS

I. Avon:

*"Let me sleep!
Lay on my brow the cool hand of death
Charm the stars to alter their course.*

*"Let me rest for a moment from the tyranny of my mind:
Oiled cog that always turns me
From the things that eternally distract me.*

*"Steal upon me sweet cemetery
For it cannot remain that
By my hand
All these things have been done!"*

II. Servalan:

*"Let me sleep!
Lay upon my brow the cool hand of decision
Charm the stars to combine their force.*

*"Take me away from the misgivings of my soul:
Rusty cog that always turns me
From the things that eternally enchant me.*

*"Steal upon me sweet victory
For it cannot remain that
At my hand
So much has been left undone!"*

SPECIAL CATEGORY A (i)

We felt that the following poem was too good just to be a Runner-Up, but wasn't quite B7 enough to be a joint winner with Jacqui Topp's poem. So here it is on its own, and Claire wins a copy of the Poetry Zine:

SPECIAL CATEGORY WINNER - Claire Gabriel

SEPULCHRE (Avalon's People)

*Come unto the white white land
Whiter than salt and milk
Whiter than old bones bleached in the sun.*

*Come tread upon this dark dark path
Darker than night and death
Darker than old blood upon the block.*

*Welcome to the stony shrine of murder
The hollow tomb where she was kissed and taken*

*No mound of skulls was built
No pyre was burned
No songs were sung*

*Only the beacon mocks and jeers
Singing the beat where hearts lie still and bleed.*

*Ice hangs upon the rocks and weeps
But not for long
For now we are come to the long long cold
And pity freezes on our lips.*

*O come come come
Then go.*

We loved this next poem, which scored very high in 'read-aloud-ability'. It's quirky and very clever, but doesn't quite fit in the Serious category, because of the wicked humour in it! (and again, wins Ingrid a Poetry Zine)

SPECIAL CATEGORY WINNER - Ingrid Porter

TERMINAL PROPHECY

*Seeming rescue from a planet, picture man with nasty habit,
Sensitive fight to win a war, future holds a blank in store.
Rearguard action never lost, to pacify will pay the cost,
Burns the doctor, to go quicker. Emotion? Not the slightest flicker.
One that keeps its head in box, then to take some fatal knocks,
Animals? Oh Dearie Me, must be Plan 9 from BBC.
Planet yields up scapegoat Cancer, death by crab for our poor dancer,
Games for crystals not a lark, requires escape from total dark.
Grains with plan that cannot fail, subject to a dominant male,
When is gold a shade of black? Before it gets transmuted back.
Softly, gently, call a name, things will never be the same,
Alliance plans that come to nought, when treachery has to be fought.*

*"I've waited for you all this while."
Grim visage blasts and stands and smiles.*

CATEGORY B) - HUMOROUS

Among the diverse entries in this category, we received a long filk to the tune of 'The Wild Rover'! We couldn't possibly award it a prize, because a) it's far too long, b) it's far too rude! and c) it was sent to us anonymously, the only clue to its origins being a Lincoln postmark! So - thanks, whoever you are - even though we can't print it, we've had a lot of fun singing it!! Another entry in this category was Vila's Limerick completed, that begins "There was a young lady from Cygnus..." A fun idea, and worth mentioning, though the limerick itself didn't really work (not many words rhyme with 'Cygnus', do they?). Nice try, though! Teresa - our winner - wins a Poetry Zine and a 10x8 of Tarrant.

WINNER - Teresa Ward

'SARCOPHAGUS' SCENARIO

*I'm younger, quicker, smarter;
Much better looking, too.
There's really no comparison
Between me and the likes of you.*

*I'm tall - not dark - and handsome,
With a head all covered in curls.
And my dazzling, pearly-white smile
Melts the hearts of all the girls.*

*So face it, Avon: you're finished.
I've everything you lack.
And - wait! Don't pull your gun!
Avon, I take it all back!*

RUNNER-UP - Ruth White

MY SECRET REVEALED

*Why do I remain? I guess you'll never know,
Though the question definitely bothers you so
It isn't your black curly hair, and eyes so kind,
Or your Welsh accent so rich and clear.
Contrary to rumour, I'm not that way inclined.*

*You know I'll never believe in your fight
For 'freedom, justice and all that is right!'
I keep playing the cynic and call you a fool.
However I still stay on the ship, although
There are times when I'm tempted to go.*

*You think it is out of loyalty to you,
That I really want to be part of your crew.
I hope you'll never discover just how wrong
You are. For the truth is, to this I'll swear
Blake, you remind me of my little teddy bear!*

RUNNER-UP - Ros Williams (just for a change!!)**VILA'S CATCH-22**

*The problem with being a hero
Is no-one believes that you are
Until you are dead; so the secret
Is let someone else be the star.*

*We're surely all heartily sick of
Those tedious old PGPs
So let's just assume they're ALL murdered
For somehow this tale has to cease.*

*You'd think that the saga is over:
They're all done away, no more strife.
But in Heaven there is quite a problem -
They all have eternal life.*

*So Servalan can't kill Kerr Avon,
Nor Blake; and Blake can't reverse;
Nor Avon kill Blake nor THAT WOMAN...
Frustration's a terrible curse.*

*The problem with being a hero:
Between these two choices you're torn,
For if you must die to achieve it...
YOU MIGHT AS WELL NEVER BE BORN!*

CATEGORY C - VOGON

For the uninitiated, Vagon poetry, according to the definition in the 'Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy', is the third worst poetry in the Universe. The second worst is by the Azgoths of Kria, and the worst poetry of all perished along with its creator, Paula Nancy Millstone Jennings of Redbridge, Surrey, with the destruction of the Earth. Now you know!

When judging this category, what we were looking for was really dreadful poetry, preferably on a fairly nauseous subject! And naturally, these poems shouldn't rhyme or scan, or indeed follow any of the 'rules' of poetry. However, we received some very entertaining poems in this category that by rhyming, scanning or general cleverness were felt to be too good to be Vagon! Therefore, we've created an extra category for these Failed Vagons, because they deserve a prize anyway. But first - hold on to your sick-bags, here come the Vagons!

WINNER - Roberta Roe

Roberta's poems arrived in a sealed envelope, with the following health warning:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN - WARNING! THIS ENVELOPE CONTAINS VOGON POETRY. PLEASE USE THE PROTECTIVE GARMENT ENCLOSED WHILE HANDLING & READING. FAILURE TO DO SO COULD RESULT IN PERMANENT DAMAGE TO MENTAL HEALTH. BY ORDER OF THE SURGEON GENERAL, FED. H.Q.

The envelope contained two poems, and the 'protective garment', which turned out to be a blindfold!!

We are pleased to be able to award Roberta the **Grunthos the Flatulent Memorial Prize** for the title and first four lines of her poem:

ODE TO A SMALL, STICKY PIECE OF BLAKE FOUND BEHIND AVON'S LEFT EAR AFTER GAUDA PRIME

*Oh witness now the Black and Silver gilded tarnished hero (Saviour and Psychopath) awake!
And lo! Verily how his head doth ache,
And with great lack of accustomed dexterity, he feels his bonce with perplexity.
And from his left ear doth pick, something small, congealed and ECK!*

However, for sheer overall Vagonity, Roberta's second poem superbly 'counterpointed the surrealism of the underlying metaphor' - and even sneaked in a little Hitchhiker-ism! It is, therefore, the uncontested winner in this section.

THOUGHTS UPON BEING SHOT DEAD BY A PSYCHOPATH IN BLACK LEATHER WHO HAS OVERDOSED ON STUDS - A Viewpoint of Roj Blake

*Bang! ... OUCH! What did you do that for, Avon?
I only wanted to extend,
A hand to indicate that I'm a friend.
But seeing you staring like that,
I think you're round the bend.
Woe me!*

*Flop! My body falls to the floor -
 What about my revolution now?
 How can I be a leader of men
 With a great big hole in my chest?
 And you've got bloodstains on my best vest!
 I think you ought to know, now, I'm feeling very depressed!*

*Oh Avon - Kerr Avon, Avon, Avon calling.
 What happened to Cally? Cally - you remember Cally -
 (Do I remember Cally?) Are you calling Cally?
 Eh? Vila? Dear Vila... Vila who must have learned
 to pick locks before he could walk. Vila! Oh Vila!*

*Jenna Stannis. My gem of a pilot Jenna, Ah Jenna!
 Avon, Vila, Cally, Jenna, Gan(?) Cally, Jenna, Vila, Avon
 Vila, Cally, Jenna, Jenna, Avon you swine! UUURGH!*

2nd PRIZE - William J. Morrison

This poem was very Vagon and would have won, had it not been for Roberta's entries, so we felt it deserved to be more than just Runner-Up!

THE BLAKE EFFECT

*Blake.
 Dead, sprawled across the floor
 His blood trickling over Gauda Prime's new linoleum
 Avon, gun in hand, smiling
 Like a TV-AM presenter
 Not dead.
 Yet.*

*And Gan, what of him?
 Lying dead.
 A bit dented really.
 Under a door
 in a place that wasn't Star One.
 Dead - until next week?*

*Cally, for whom Terminal lived up to its name.
 She lies dead on the floor
 And the ceiling and the walls
 When Servalan's bomb went boom!*

*Gentle Zen, all knowing, all disintegrated
 His wise atoms scattered into little pieces
 In much the same way as Jenna's.*

RUNNER-UP - Teresa Ward (again!)

This wasn't quite icky enough to be truly Vagon, though it's quite mad and cleverly bad! As one of the judges (oh alright, Fliss) said: "It takes talent to fly a dead poem!"

ODE TO AVON

*Blake's my buddy; he's my pal,
 And Jenna, Gan, and even Cal-
 ly. But the one I like the best
 Is good ol' Avon - he beats the rest.*

*Blake likes fighting for the free-
 dom of the galaxy.
 But stealing's my occupation.
 My boss made me that way - Mr. Nation.*

*With Avon standing at my side
 (much safer than when he is behind
 me) I know riches are on the way.
 I'm talking gold; and that ain't hay.*

*But hay is for horses, not humans.
We like our soma, unruined.
But not very often for Avon.
Did you know someone's just put a new wave on*

*His hair? But I'm getting ahead of myself.
That's not 'til 4th season, which is still on the shelf.
So I'd better say farewell, and send you my best, all.
My liquor is waiting; love from Vila Restal.*

This poem scored minus several million in 'read-aloud-ability'! All attempts to read it were greeted with cries of "Please stop, I can't bear it!". One of the judges (oh all right, Fliss again) declared she would rather be thrown out of an air-lock than have to listen to it - so we decided, as that is one of the criteria by which genuine Vagon poetry is judged, that it should be a runner up!

RUNNER-UP - A.J. Startup

FREEDOM'S CRUSADE

*Oh thine valiant Blake with thine crew of felons,
In the Liberator, controlled by Zen.
Set out to free their fellow man from the tyrannical Federation.
But Servalan and disfigured Travis stood firmly in their way.
The victories few soon came their way.
But the quest for Star One cost the life of Olag Gan.
On they went to seek their goal but in the end were thwarted.
By Andromedans, intent on conquest.
Blake was lost, along with Jenna, so Avon he took charge.
Joined by Dayna and bullying Tarrant once more did they set off.
The cause was lost as Avon grew psychotic.
That Terminal trap cost Cally's life and the Liberator's destruction.
But rescue came to the stranded heroes in the shape of Dorian.
This brought a new crew member, her name Soolin, but Dorian horribly died.
His life giving Gestalt destroyed.
So on they went to Gauda Prime and to their final battle
As one by one, they died in that base, that is except for Avon,
His fate unknown as not the Federation.
But the BBC axed our favourite programme.*

SPECIAL CATEGORY C (i) - FAILED VOGONS!

Although the subject matter was suitably nasty, we felt that this poem was just too good to be a Vagon - it rhymes and flows too well!

WINNER - Martin Leigh

TRAVIS'S ODE TO A PURPLE BALL

*Oh brilliant purple ball
Your victims start to cough
They shrivel up into disgusting lumps
And bits of them drop off.*

*That labour grade, he was the first
To test your magic skill
He went in healthily enough
But very soon felt ill.*

*We went to check the body
(It hadn't taken long)
But only gunge lay on the floor
And in the air - a pong!*

*I'll hang you on my Christmas tree
Amongst balls of blue and red
And then I'd like to set you free
And watch my guests drop dead.*

*If only Blake could meet you
I know things would be great -
The robot would release you
And he'd disintegrate!*

THAT'D TEACH THE BASTARD...

This poem has a nice wry humour to it, and isn't really Vogon at all!

RUNNER-UP - Priscilla Fitcher

VILA'S VOGON

*A line through the pattern of infinity
Is really hard to find,
Especially when one has important things
Milling around in one's mind.
Like whether to change one's socks
Or steal the Federation blind.
Or whether one's drunken walk
Is more apparent from front or behind.
Or whether being a hero matters
When one is sheltering behind
Blake or Avon or Cally or Jenna
Or someone else of the heroic kind.
Yes, a line through the pattern of infinity
Is pretty hard to find.*

Apart from rhyming, this one is far too clever to be a genuine Vogon!

RUNNER-UP - Margaret Scroggs

THE TRAGIC LOSS OF THE LIBERATOR - After William McGonagall

*The dreadful news has just this moment come through, the great ship LIBERATOR is lost -
Which of all possible disasters that could be reported as you'll agree is very nearly the worst!
And this terrible occurrence, it is said, happened the following way -
The intelligence was sent to Avon on that fateful, most terrible day
(In what manner and from whom I will leave you to make your own guess!)
That Blake was still alive, though apparently in a bit of a mess.
So then Kerr Avon (Oh, most noble soul, I must proclaim him!) in his haste to go to the rescue, without thought of
self-preservation,
Flew that splendid ship through a cloud of a substance most dreadfully corrosive
Which ate right through the hull, and at the same time also ruined Zen,
Which meant, and this was calamitous, the auto-repairs were unable to mend it again.
The result of all of which was, to cut a long story short,
The ship blew up just after they got to where Blake was, according to the report.
Servalan was aboard at the time, but she escaped in all the confusion,
While Avon subsequently discovered that the news about Blake was, after all,
nothing more than an illusion.
So after all they ended up gaining nothing as recompense for losing their ship.
In fact, with Cally getting killed as well (which I forgot to mention) it was in
all a totally disastrous trip!*

The Vogon prizes are (we hope) suitable... Roberta wins a Poetry Zine, a tin of Green Slime and a £5 voucher to a local Asylum of her choice. She needs it!! William and Martin win a tin of slime for their efforts.

And that's just about it, folks! Thanks to all of you who sent in poems, well done to the winners, and better luck next time to the non-winners. (Bridesmaid again, Ros!!).

NEXT COMPETITION (from a suggestion by Sue Wilkes - thanks, Sue)

Having satisfied the Muse of Poetry for the time being, it seems only fair that the next competition should be prose. And not just any old prose, but the prose equivalent of Vogon poetry, along the lines of the famous annual 'It Was a Dark and Stormy Night' competition (which looks for the very worst opening sentence for a story or novel, in various categories - Romance, Crime, Historical, etc). (Ed... does anyone actually have a copy of this? If so, would you sell it, or at least let us borrow it? Ctc. Jackie.)

There are two Categories in this competition:

a) Avon Stood Over Blake's Body...

In this category, we're looking for the worst opening sentence/paragraph for a PGP story! Or indeed, any other story, it doesn't have to be limited to PGP. But you get the idea.

b) ...And With One Bound They Were Free!

In this category, we're looking for the most ludicrous end sentence/paragraph to a story or episode - again, it doesn't have to be PGP.

You can enter as many times as you like, in either or both categories. Have fun!

THEATRE REVIEWS

Glynis Barber in SUMMER BREEZE by Arthur Schnitzler,

at The Gate, Notting Hill

Review by Nicola Best

Yet another mad rush through the streets of London to get to a play! The Gate is a small fringe theatre, seating about fifty. Evidence of the play's popularity was clear; before it started dozens of people came to the table to ask for returns. You have to walk through the set to get to your seats and the atmosphere was all-enveloping as you crushed leaves and twigs beneath your feet. Because of the immediacy of the stage, one felt like an interloper in the story in which romance, drama and passion took place in equal measure.

The story revolves around Professor Vincenz Friedlein's (Roy Boyd) summer residence. He is a sculptor who is working on some important figures in town. His wife Josefa (Glynis Barber) is jealous and angry with him as she thinks he cares more for his work and other woman, whom she suspects he visits in town. Friedlein's niece, Gusti (Myriam Cyr) who has aspirations to be an actress, is staying with them. Edward, (Marc Warren) the Professor's son, is head-over-heels in love with Gusti. Unfortunately, Kathi (Nina Botting) the servant, is madly in love with Edward!

Into this charged situation comes the local priest (Steven Mann), who is having a crisis of faith about his calling. He has his brother staying with him (Christopher Milburn), a bright and breezy soldier who flirts with Gusti. Gusti keeps the fact that she has been given an acting job in the city away from Edward at first. He thinks that he loves her, and vows to join her when he finds out. He discovers that Gusti's acting means more to her than he does. Josefa is attracted to the priest, and, lonely and discontented, she tries to seduce him. He is worrying about his brother who has gone to fight a duel, and in need of comfort, and loving her, he nearly commits the ultimate crime for a priest.

All is resolved with the usual amount of heartache. Vincenz realises that he has been neglecting Josefa and invites her to town to see the finished sculptures, to which she gladly agrees. Edward grows up after his experience with Gusti, and she goes off to make her way in Vienna.

Glynis Barber as Josefa was really excellent, conveying tenderness and frustration, and was especially good in the scenes with the priest. The scenes crackled with emotion when they were on stage together. Myriam Cyr was a little exhausting as the gushing Gusti who hardly drew breath the whole play. Still, that was the part, and she proved a competent comedienne in her scenes with Edward. Roy Boyd gave a good, understated performance as the Professor. Steven Mann as the priest was a bundle of nervous energy throughout, and made his lack of faith very convincing. Christopher Milburn was well cast as the cheerful, unworried soldier. But acting honours must go to Glynis Barber and Steven Mann, who said more in their looks and gestures than the playwright could have hoped for in their respective parts.

The set was well designed and lit; leaves scattered on the veranda and lights filtered like sunlight. It all added to a wonderful play. My only complaint was that I only managed to see it once!

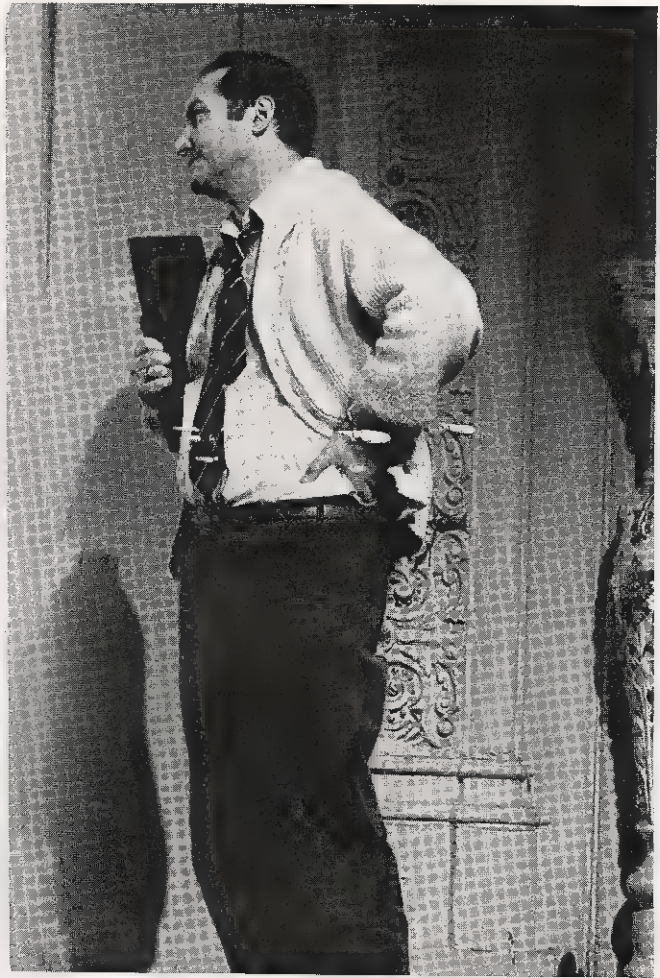
Michael Keating in NOISES OFF

at the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham

Review by Gena Davies

I had not seen Michael Keating on the stage for several years, so when I learned in the Horizon Newsflash that he would be appearing in two plays in Cheltenham about 70 miles from my home in Wales, I decided to take the opportunity to go and see him again. Bad weather frustrated my plans of going to see 'A View from the Bridge', but I consoled myself with the thought that anyhow a play by Michael Frayn was more to my taste than one by Arthur Miller. Fortunately the first opportunity to see the other play Michael was appearing in, 'Noises Off', turned out to coincide with the first sunny Saturday morning for weeks, perfect for an enjoyable drive through Monmouth, the Forest of Dean and Gloucester, to Chepstow. (Note for B7 trivia addicts: The direct route from Monmouth to Gloucester goes through the Forest of Dean past Longhope where the location filming for the episode 'Star One' was shot). I arrived before the curtain rose at 2.30. Shortly before this happened I had a slight surprise when I opened my programme at some perfectly conventional-looking programme notes and saw a photograph of Michael's familiar face under the heading 'Lloyd Dallas, Director'. The notes below the picture told me that he had won the South of Scotland Critics award in 1968, and that in 1972 had directed a highly successful season for the National Theatre of Sri Lanka. The notes were clearly spoofs, but as I wondered what this was intended to tell me about the play, the lights dimmed and the curtain rose on the first scene of what appeared to be an extremely traditional farce. A char, whose comic working-class accent would have appeared overdone 50 years ago, was answering the phone and explaining that her employers were in Spain. I was rather puzzled by what I was watching; the other work of Michael Frayn's I had seen had been far more subtle. But at the same moment the thought entered my head, Michael Keating appeared in the side aisle of the theatre shouting out criticisms and directions to the stage. (Nervous whisper from pensioner in row behind me at this point: "Oh dear, I thought it was going to be funny, but I'm afraid it may be all modern!") The reason for the spoof programme notes now became clear. This was a play about the production of a play by a touring company. The spoof notes were intended to be the programme to this play, which was a traditional farce entitled 'Nothing On'. This may sound complicated, but so was the situation rapidly developing on the stage. It soon became obvious that 'Nothing On', which Lloyd Dallas (Michael Keating) was trying to direct, was due to open within a few hours, and everybody was working in an atmosphere of increasingly hysterical panic especially as the play being rehearsed had not had its dress rehearsal yet. Unfortunately, it was not only handicapped by this but by an appallingly poor script containing every cliché in the book, and the standard of acting provided by the cast was of the same quality as the script! Consequently, it was not surprising that the play's director, Lloyd Dallas, was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, which he was trying to cope with by swallowing tranquillisers wholesale!

The remainder of 'Noises Off' (which unusually for the modern theatre is in three acts) charts the comic disintegration of the company and the play as their tour progresses until finally at Stockton-on-Tees everything, literally, falls apart. It is told in a way which combines sharp dialogue between the people it caricatures with the sort of slapstick comedy which is reminiscent of the old silent films. This is extremely difficult to do well since it requires perfect timing if it is to succeed, particularly since at times so much was happening at once on stage that I found myself wishing for a video recorder so I could run an action replay later! And some of the parts required some rather tricky-looking stunts, including a spectacular fall downstairs by Graeme Edler, who played Garry Lejeune, the juvenile lead in the touring company. I am sure that if badly done, 'Noises Off' could become indistinguishable from the type of play parodied as 'Nothing On', since this type of comedy requires perfect timing to bring off. It is a tribute to the professional skills of the cast that this was never in danger of happening, although the play must be extremely tiring to perform in. Michael had plenty of opportunities to show his well-known talent for comedy. His role might not have been so physically active as some of the others, but he had some very funny dialogue as the harassed director! However, I was surprised and rather sorry to find that although the matinee was well-attended, I appeared to be the only B7 fan present that particular Saturday afternoon. I thoroughly enjoyed the play and therefore would normally tell all other B7 fans to go to see it, if possible. Cheltenham is on a main line railway and the M5 motorway, so must be accessible to fans in the Bristol & Birmingham areas as well as most South Wales. (...Jac.- True enough, & in fact I toiled out to see it from Manchester, via London, together with Nicola Best, Roberta Roe and Henry Eggleton - but obviously on a different day to you!)



MICHAEL KEATING AS LLOYD DALLAS IN 'NOISES OFF'
photo ©Ed Hamilton, Artifid Studio



JACQUELINE PEARCE IN 'A BIT OF A WIZ'

Review by Jackie Ophir

'A Bit of a Wiz' was a Midnight Matinee, a late-late-night charity event in aid of the Terrence Higgins Trust in general, and the Romanian babies tragically suffering from AIDS (as a result of contaminated blood transfusions) in particular. A whole galaxy of stars had donated their services for this very worthy cause, each doing a short turn - a song, a sketch, a poem. Worthy of mention were: Tony Head (alias the man from the Gold Blend adverts!) and Jo Munroe, who sang a wonderful rendition of 'We Can Work it Out'; Sheila Gish and Duncan Preston, who performed a scene from 'Streetcar Named Desire'; Stephen Fry, who recited the A.E. Houseman poem 'Last Poem XII'; Paula Wilcox and Rupert Graves who recited as a duet the wonderfully rude e.e. cummings poem 'May I Feel?'; Gerald Harper, who narrated a Kipling story; and Frances Tomelty and Mark Rylance, who performed a scene from 'The Normal Heart'.

Jacqueline Pearce was the last person to appear before the interval, and was erroneously billed in the programme sheet as 'The Jacqueline Pearce Show'. In fact, she simply spoke to the audience, and held them mesmerised as she told of a young friend of hers who had recently died of AIDS. It was a deceptively simple and moving story, and it's a measure of Jackie's astonishing stage presence that the previously restive audience listened to her in absolute stillness, and then exploded in tumultuous applause. Nicola and I met Jackie afterwards, and she told us that because the show was overrunning, she'd been told seconds before going on stage that she had to cut down her act, and had basically ad-libbed it! You would never have guessed this, having seen her - it had been a wonderfully professional and deeply moving performance.

The second part of the show was the performance of 'A Bit of a Wiz' - a spoof of 'Wizard of Oz'. It was utterly shambolic, and almost too embarrassing to mention - suffice to say that although the costumes were pretty good and it had the occasionally amusing line, it was under-rehearsed, nobody seemed to know their lines, and anyway they'd only got about half-way through by 2.30 am, when the management had to close the theatre!

All in all, it wasn't a terribly brilliant evening. Although some of the acts were good, none were outstanding, and the whole show seemed to have been cobbled together. Jacqueline Pearce's appearance was far and away the best thing in it, and her performance shone out, like a diamond in a dustbin.

GARETH THOMAS IN KING LEAR,

at the Northcott Theatre, Exeter

Review by Jan Harris

I was not exactly sure what to expect from this production at the Northcott. Some of the other plays I have seen there had been acceptable, but not particularly inspiring. Nor did that evening's weather bode well, although the wind and driving rain could be described as suitably atmospheric! The rest of the audience seemed to consist largely of students (not surprising, as the theatre is attached to the university) who clutched their annotated copies of the text with earnest, and, no doubt, commendable anticipation.

The stage was at ground level, with the front row of seats forming its perimeter. The set itself was cleverly constructed with the main backdrop of a stone facade rising to reveal the supposed heath for the storm scenes. This latter was less than satisfactory, seeming to owe its inspiration more to present-day Beirut than the British countryside of old! The storm was well-handled but suffered on the night I attended by comparison with the real thing going on outside - my timing was obviously off when I booked my ticket.

Previously I had only seen Gareth in his more well-known television roles and, to be honest, found myself pleasantly surprised by his portrayal of Lear. Playing him as a distraught and disillusioned man, increasingly at odds with both his family and life in general, he was not as mad as he has been portrayed in most productions, but perhaps all the more believable because of that. If I have a small criticism it is that having appeared only late middle-aged in the first half, he seemed to age twenty years during the interval. I wonder what he had been up to?

The supporting cast, comprising the theatre's resident company, all seemed to raise the level of their performances. In particular, Roger Delves-Broughton and Robin McDonald as the son and bastard son of the Duke of Gloucester were utterly convincing in their characters. The scenes with the former as Edgar in his madman guise were superbly acted and for me, the best performance of the night. Robin McDonald as Edmund enjoyed himself enormously in the early scenes, sharing his wicked machinations with a conspiratorial audience.

Kent, Gloucester and the Fool were carried off well, as were Goneril and Regan. Unfortunately, Helen Pearson as Cordelia seemed rather mis-cast, appearing too old for a role I have always envisaged as much younger. This was not helped by a rather wooden performance that failed to provide the necessary contrast to her shrewish sisters.

The costumes were interesting: soft tops and trousers with a shirt-like garment over them for the men (somewhat reminiscent of the very early 'Blake' costumes, if you can stand the comparison) and simple dresses and capes for the women. The leather collars and gloves added to some of the costumes towards the end seemed to sit rather uneasily, but filled a need created by the simplicity of the set. I did, however, feel a twinge of sympathy for the Earl of Albany, who was dressed head-to-toe in a delicate shade of baby pink - very sweet!

So generally, a very enjoyable evening. Lear is a long play and an extra interval would have been appreciated in order to stretch the legs - heaven knows how the front row coped - but that is a minor point. It was worth 'braving the storm' for (!) and even the most diligent of students would have been well satisfied.

TWO SCENES FROM 'KING LEAR' - WITH GARETH THOMAS AS LEAR AND HELEN PEARSON AS CORDELIA
photos ©Michael Alsford



NORTH-TO-SOUTH-WEST - a Horizon 'Cultural' Weekend in Exeter!

by Crystal Denton

In the pouring rain and amidst gale force winds, a group of mad B7 fans from the North West piled into two cars and set off on the long drive to Exeter. (Idiots, I hear you say? Well, bear with me, all will be revealed!) As both cars were being driven by Horizon committee members (Jackie Ophir and Steve Haines) I felt confident that there would be no problems. So, I was somewhat surprised when Steve took a thirty-mile detour via Preston for no apparent reason! (...Jac.- You would think that after getting lost for an hour in Ayr - er, Leeds - Steve would have had his navigation computers repaired! Evidently not...)

Despite such minor problems, we arrived in Exeter to meet Nicola Best only one hour late. We dropped all our luggage at the guest house and, pausing only to wake Nicola (well, it was 4.30 pm - I suppose a girl's entitled to some sleep!) we rushed off to a very interesting Sci-Fi shop, where I picked up some issues of Time Screen and Jackie negotiated the sale of Horizon merchandise - there's dedication for you!

After dinner in a rather nice cafe, Nicola used her yuppie phonecard to ring for a taxi to take us to the theatre. (...Jac.- When I asked Crystal why she kept referring to Nic's phonecard as 'yuppie', she said "You try finding one in Colne!" Oh, the North-South divide...) Unfortunately, since it was Saturday evening we were told that all the taxis were booked - we were offered one for 8.15pm. PANIC!!! HELP!!! The play started at 8.00, we couldn't have come all this way just to miss the start!!! However, being very resourceful fans, we refused to think of defeat, and rushed to the bus station - only to be informed that no buses ran to the theatre on Saturday evenings! (...Jac.- Honestly, that theatre was so inaccessible, it made us wonder whether they actually WANTED anybody to see the play!) We got a bus as far as possible, then walked the rest of the way - uphill, to the university campus. We stopped to ask the way at a very security-conscious computer building - the students opened the door for us, and then returned to their work, ignoring us completely! When we eventually managed to find the theatre, we made our way to the stage door and asked if we could see Gareth for a few minutes before the performance began, and were told that we could. We met him in the bar and chatted for a while. Gareth told us, very apologetically, that he wouldn't be able to manage full volume that evening, as he was suffering from a throat infection. About ten minutes before the play was due to start, Gareth rushed off to get ready - talk about cutting things fine! Amongst the photos from the play on display in the foyer, we spotted a photo of Gareth taken by Jackie (the one on the back on N/L21). She wasn't quite sure whether to feel honoured that her photo had been chosen for the display, or annoyed that she wasn't credited for having taken it! (...Jac. - BOTH!!!). We found our seats, astonishing the programme sellers on the way by buying about forty programmes between us!

On to the play - it lasted three hours, with a ten minute break in the middle. Despite its length, and at great credit to the actors, the time seemed to fly by. I'm not usually a great lover of Shakespeare - my experience is limited to 'Macbeth', which I studied at school! This play, however, held my attention from beginning to end. If you know the play, you'll realise that Lear acted somewhat less than intelligently in giving all his kingdom to his two not-very-doting daughters, Goneril and Regan (played by Su Elliott and Sally Greenwood). On reading the play, which I dutifully did before going to see it, I thought of Lear as simply a silly old fool! After seeing Gareth's interpretation of the part, however, I felt a great sympathy for the kindly old man, who, in trying his best to help his daughters lead a happy life, was tricked in the cruellest way. Through the scheming of Goneril and Regan, Lear and Cordelia were left with nothing. The play is, of course, a great tragedy, but a little light relief was provided by some of the scenes featuring the Earl of Gloucester's bastard son, Edmund (played by Robin McDonald). Robin was a very good actor, and seemed to enjoy every minute he was on stage. Paul Darrow once played this part - I would have loved to have seen him then - I'm sure he must have acted this part wonderfully - it seemed tailor-made for him! Gareth played some very moving scenes with the Earl of Gloucester's other son, Edgar (Roger Delves-Broughton) who also became outcast due to his enterprising brother Edmund.

The effects in the play were very well done, the fight scenes and the scene in which the Earl of Gloucester's eyes were torn out were very realistic and especially in the latter case, quite horrifying.

In all, I really enjoyed the play, it was acted very well, very emotionally, with full commitment on the parts of all the actors. Gareth was great, and didn't seem to be at all hindered by his sore throat! Congratulations are due to him and all the other members of the cast. Afterwards, despite the fact that it must have been an exhausting play for Gareth, he came and chatted with us for half an hour, and also signed all the programmes we had bought!

We finally left the theatre and walked back to the guest house, where we congregated in one of the rooms, and, feeling in a very good mood, stayed up until about 3.00am, talking and drinking some gorgeous liqueurs which Jackie had very thoughtfully brought along! (...Jac.- And it was that very same dark and stormy night in Exeter that Nicola and I decided to register for the ill-fated Del-10! Never make decisions based on Lear and liqueur...)

The next day we spent the morning wandering around Exeter in the pouring rain, and the second treat of the weekend came that afternoon, when we met the writer Colin Davis for his Horizon interview! Suffice to say, it wasn't really an interview, more a friendly chat. He was a great man, really fun to talk to.

The journey back was relatively uneventful. We made it back in one piece, despite Jackie insisting on driving down the motorway at 85mph!! We arrived home very late, feeling absolutely shattered, so I took the next day off college and stayed in bed! The whole weekend was really great, and I'd like to thank Gareth and Colin for making it such fun.

LEAR AND THE FOOL © Michael Alsford



NEWS ON THE ACTORS

- GARETH THOMAS** Made a 4 part Radio series for BBC Radio 4 (in the 'Classic Serial' Slot. He played Marah (Ships Captain!) in *'Jim Davis'* by John Masefield. Also made another episode of LWT's *'London's Burning'*. Recently filmed *'Emlyn's Moon'* for HTV.
- SALLY KNYVETTE** Continues in the regular cast of Yorkshire TV's *'Emmerdale'* as Kate Sugden.
- PAUL DARROW** Was seen in ITV's *'Making News'* as George Parnell. Alas, no new episodes will be made. Paul's new production company is called 'Satchel Productions' and its first production was *'Trap for a Lonely Man'* starring... Paul Darrow and Janet Lees Price, playing Farnham in Surrey. *'Trap'* will play one week at the Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton commencing 18 June (Box Office Tel: 0902 714775). It is scheduled to begin touring the UK on 3rd September 90, but no further information is available as yet.
- JAN CHAPPELL** Jan did some audio recording reading a novel for the audio library. She has also been doing some more teaching, and has been doing a post graduate course.
- MICHAEL KEATING** Had a small part in *'View from the Bridge'* 25 Jan to 10 Feb at the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham. Then a part in *'Noises Off'* at the same theatre, 22 Feb to 17 March. He filmed a small part in LWT's *'London's Burning'* and is currently in the play *'Outside Edge'* until 16 June at The Mill at Sonning.
- JOSETTE SIMON** Will be appearing at the National Theatre, London in *'After the Fall'* opening 22 September.
- GLYNIS BARBER** Appeared in *'Same Old Moon'* by Geraldine Aron and directed by Ned Sherrin - 10/28 April at the Nuffield Theatre, Southampton. Hopefully this will be transferring to the West End at the beginning of July. Glynis also made an American TV series called *'Monsters'* - her episode, entitled *'Mannequin of Death'*, is available on video on the Castle Hendring label, price £9.99.
- JACQUELINE PEARCE** Appeared in *'A Bit of a Wiz'* - a late night charity event in London. Can currently be seen on ITV in repeats of *'Moondial'*.
- STEPHEN GREIF** Filmed a play called *'Rab C. Nesbit'* for the BBC, playing an Inspector. Was in *'Abracadaver'*, at the Theatre Royal, Windsor in March but alas, this play did not transfer to the West End as expected. There is a possibility that it may be revived later in the year.
- BRIAN CROUCHER** Appeared in the play *'Barnaby and the Old Boys'* at the Vaudeville Theatre, Strand.
- PETER TUDDENHAM** Filmed a further series of the BBCs *'Five to Eleven'* programme and been involved with more dialect coaching.
- JANET LEES PRICE** Played opposite Paul in *'Trap for a Lonely Man'* in Farnham, with tour planned for the autumn (see Paul's entry above).
- SHEELAGH WELLS** Worked on another episode of *'Casualty'* and is working regularly for BSB on various programmes. Sheelagh is also due to do another set of public appearances for the BBC at the end of May at the Royal Bath & West Show.
- MAT IRVINE** Working on another schools programme *'Search Out Science'* which is Science for the 7/10s as Effects Designer. Due to start work on a new series about the history of computers for the BBC Science and Features Department. At the moment it's called *'The Information Age'* although this will change. He was also interviewed recently about the Hubble Space Telescope for the Childrens Channel for transmission on BSB. As a writer he has been retained as a Consultant on a new magazine called *'Collecting Scale Models'*. Also, *'Techno'* is being repeated.
- COLIN DAVIS** (author of 'Gold') Has written a play called *'Thin Boy'* for BBC radio, which was broadcast 30 April and repeated 5th May.

AGENTS ADDRESSES - if you have any mail, etc. that you wish to send to any of the actors, please write to them c/o their agents as per the following list.

- GARETH THOMAS**, c/o Julian Belfrage Associates, 68 St James' Street, London SW1.
SALLY KNYVETTE, c/o Joseph and Wagg Personal Management, 2 Tunstall Road, London SW9 8BN.
PAUL DARROW & JANET LEES PRICE, c/o Roger Carey Management, 64 Thornton Avenue, London W4 1QQ.
JAN CHAPPELL, send mail addressed to Jan Chappell, c/o Diane Gies, 18 Holt Rd, N. Wembley, Middx. HAO 3PS.
MICHAEL KEATING, c/o Timothy Combe, Ellison Combe Associates, 16 Evelyn Gardens, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2PL.
STEVEN PACEY, c/o CCA Personnel, White House, 29 Dawes Road, London SW6 7DT.
JOSETTE SIMON, c/o Pippa Markham, Plant & Froggitt Ltd., 3 Windmill Street, London W1.
GLYNIS BARBER, c/o Billy Marsh Associates, 19 Denmark Street, London WC2H 8NH. (NOTE NEW AGENT)
JACQUELINE PEARCE, c/o Michael Wiggs, Philip Shaw Associates, Garden Studios, 11/15 Betterton Street, Covent Garden, London WC2H 9BP.
PETER TUDDENHAM, c/o BBC TV Centre, Wood Lane, London W12 8QT.
DAVID JACKSON c/o Joseph & Wagg Personal Management, 2 Tunstall Road, London SW9 8BN.
BRIAN CROUCHER, c/o Howard Pays, CCA Personnel, White House, 29 Dawes Road, London SW6 7DT.

STEPHEN GREIF, c/o Roger Carey Management, 64 Thornton Avenue, London W4 1QQ.
SHEELAGH WELLS, c/o 20A New Road, Brentford, Middlesex TW8 0NX.
MAT IRVINE c/o BBC Visual Effects Dept., 250 Western Avenue, North Acton, London W3 6XJ.
TERRY NATION c/o Celebrity Forum Productions, PO Box 1786, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272, USA.

LONDON AND REGIONAL MEETINGS

As many of you know, we hold regular Club meetings, both in London and now also in the 'Northwest'. Other regional groups are also getting together from time to time, and contact addresses follow of people willing to host/organise meetings, or at least to join other like minded local fans - please do contact your nearest group.

Horizon welcomes all members, 'regulars' or 'first time attendees'. No charge is made, although we are always happy to receive edible contributions, such as chocolates, crisps, soft drinks, chocolates... We provide hot food & snacks, anyway. At these gatherings we watch videos, talk about B7 and a myriad of other topics, often have club merchandise for sale, and generally have a good time. Sometimes strange activities are organised, such as wandering round quarries, so why not come along? We love to meet new people, and especially welcome anyone from overseas who can come along. If you know your travel plans, let us know and we'll see if we can arrange anything. All we ask ALL of you planning to attend, is to please call the 'meeting holder' a day or two BEFORE the meeting to a) check it's still going ahead, and b) to let US know how many people to cater for (ie buy the food & drink!) Thanks and look forward to seeing you.

NEXT LONDON MEETING: Sunday 8th July at Diane Gies' house, 18 Holt Road, North Wembley, Middlesex HA0 3PS.
 Tel: 081 904 5588

NEXT NORTHWEST MEETING: Sunday 15th July at Steve Haines' house, 14 Halliwell Avenue, Hathershaw, Oldham, Lancs. OL8 3DL. Tel: 061-626 8765.

OTHER REGIONAL GROUPS - anyone wishing to have their name added to this list, please drop Diane Gies a line. And I'd be interested to hear how the people listed below are getting on, perhaps they'd drop me a line too.

CAMBS REGIONAL MEETING GROUP - we are interested in setting up a regional group in or around the Cambridge area. Emphasis on B7 but also covering most other TV/Film SF. Anyone who may be interested should contact: Steve Wilson (0954) 211332 or Fiona Haggart (0223) 213806, (between 6.30pm and 11.00 pm) or Joanna Bigmore - Steeple Bumstead (0440730) 539.

COVENTRY - Anyone out there? Ctc. Clare Driver, c/o 95 Humber Avenue, Stoke, Coventry.

POOLE, DORSET - Anyone out there within day trip distance, please contact Serena Trent, 13 Astbury Avenue, Wallisdown, Poole, Dorset BH12 5DT.

DERBY/NOTTS AREA GROUP - Do you live in or near this area? If so, why not join the Central B7 Group? Anyone interested, please write to Stuart Tideswell, 83 Collingwood Road, Long Eaton, Notts. NG10 1DV.

DEVON AREA - is anyone interested in starting regional meetings in my area? Contact Sharon King, 4 Fraser Road, Exmouth, Devon EX8 4DH.

WILTSHIRE AREA - Any B7 fans in the deepest pockets of Wiltshire? It's a bit isolated to be an SF fan around here. Contact Lee Sartain, 51 Hardens Mead, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 3AF.

PEN PALS - We run a pen pal service too, for those of you who prefer written contacts to actual meetings, drop Diane Gies a line if you want to be included on this list - it's free! All you need to do is give your name, address, interests, what sort of person you want to reply and anything else you can think of.

KIN MING LOOI

17 Cherry Tree Road, East Finchley, London N2 9QL

I am a 21 year old software engineer, strongly interested in Doctor Who, role-playing games, wargames and, needless to say, Blake's Seven. I would be particularly interested in hearing from anyone who has ever designed or tried designing a Blake's Seven RPG.

KLAUS JOERGENSEN

Hestetangsvej 67, 3520 Farum, Denmark

If you are a Blake and Cally fan, I would like to hear from you. Or if you are from a Scandinavian country, it could be nice to write in our own languages. Am I the only "nordbo"?

WILLIAM COOK

153 Charles Street, Milford Haven, Dyfed SA73 2HP

Er, hello, anybody out there who's interested in a pen pal? Being that I'd prefer a written contact to an actual meeting, I thought I'd request one. I'm a fan of Doctor Who and Star Cops, as much as Blake's 7. I'm particularly fond of the first two series of B7.

JENNY GALLAGHER

60 Lilli Pili Pt Rd, Lilli Pili, 2229, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia

Born 7/6/66. I'm a primary school teacher who's very new to fandom. Interests: Writing Blake's 7 fan fiction, reading, reading fan fiction and craft. Favourite characters: Avon, Vila, Blake, Jenna, Cally, Dayna, Tarrant, Soolin...

LINDSAY BONSER

24 Warwick Gardens, Tividale, Warley, Birmingham, England.

I feel a little isolated and my husband-to-be (wedding on 14th April) does not share my love of B7, though he did watch the series. If there is anyone in Birmingham who would like to get in touch with me, to write or swap zines, please do.

THANKS, AND 'THE END'

Thanks to all of you for your support, good wishes, letters, articles, artwork, stories, etc. Thanks to Colin Davis for his very interesting talk/interview. Thanks to everyone who has been wishing us a Happy 10th Birthday - we're looking forward to the NEXT 10 years!!

If there is anyone we have forgotten to credit, or any mistakes in this NL, do excuse us. Anyway, hope you enjoyed this edition. Keep those articles/LOCs etc. coming in.

And if anyone out there doesn't like the way this N/L has been typeset and printed, well perhaps you'd like to do it for me next time as the very last thing in the universe I wanted to do these last 2 weeks was learn an entire new WP programme, re-programme various weird things, typeset everything with no experience at all and without any idea of how it will look when printed, search through yellow pages for a reasonably priced Laser Printer service and schlepp off there in the middle of the night to get it done. So there. Everyone please be nice to me for a while!! And thanks to Rosemarie from a VERY grateful Diane for your hours of advice on the telephone and for dashing over here with a throat infection because I'd managed to wipe out my entire Word Perfect disk!! And to paraphrase Vila, creating a Mock 'C' Drive is the most fun you can have in the galaxy with your clothes on!!

VERY URGENT THINGS TO DO RIGHT NOW...

- a) Renew your membership with Nicola Best if you have the 'Dreaded X'
- b) Order a 9" Model Liberator kit & the New Horizon Mug
- c) Order Horizon 14 and The Epic and Technical Manual 2
- d) Order a Sheelagh Wells Make-Up video (from Sheelagh (UK) or Space Rat Press (USA))
- e) Enter the Dark and Stormy Night Competition
- f) Send us your articles, LOCs, ads, etc.
- g) If you've been around since 'The Beginning of B7 fandom in the UK' or near enough - please send us your reminiscences.

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PS Apologies to Gena Davies who sent me some excellent photos of the Horizon party which were going in this N/L. They were on my desk for 3 weeks until the day it was due to be pasted up & taken to the printers, when they disappeared! I expect I'll find them tomorrow...



